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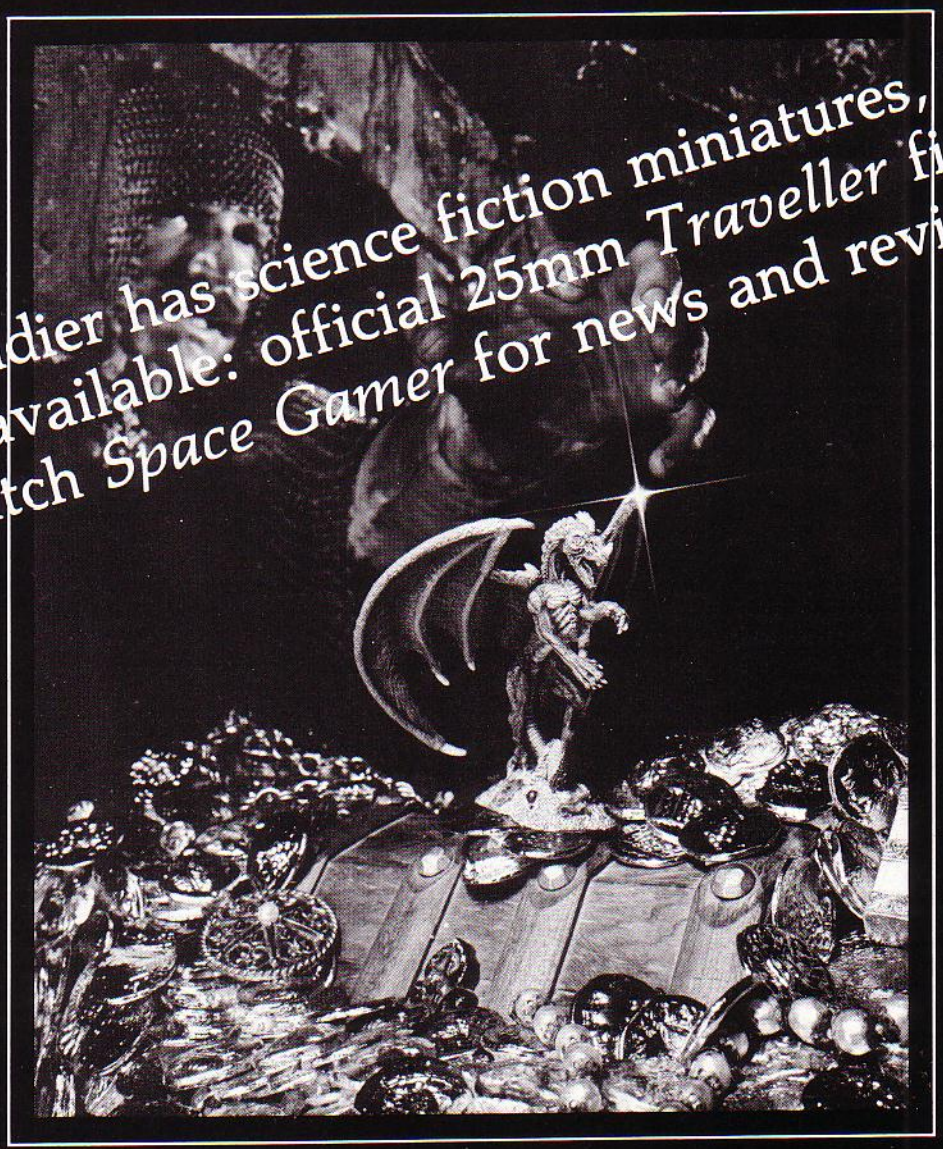
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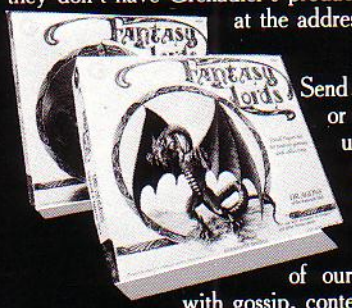

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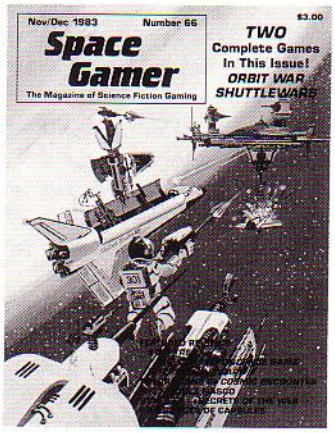

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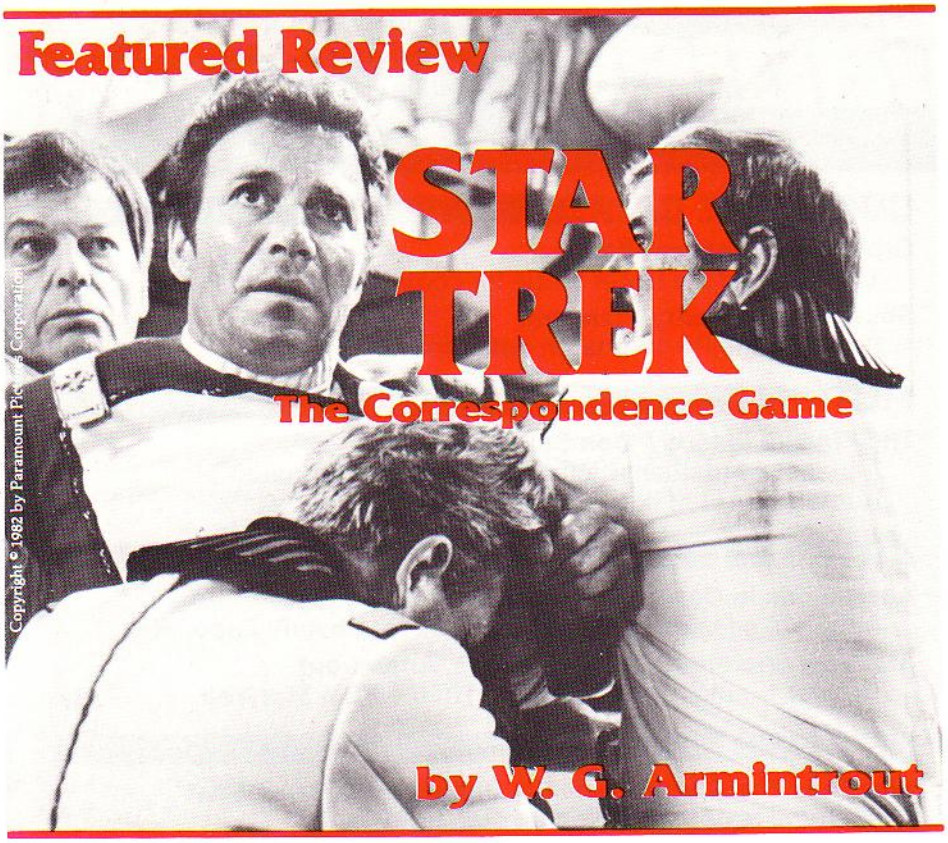
Featured Review



"Captain's Log, Stardate 4501.1150. Kirk reporting. The ***Enterprise*** *continues her routine 'watchdog' patrol of Klingon Border Quadrant 16. Our patrol of KBG15 was completed early in the ship's day, and the Astrogator on duty has entered into the log our course for KBG16. We are now in the thirty-second day of this patrol. Commander Scott reports that the problem causing power losses from the warp engines has been repaired again, but he urges a complete reworking of the system at our first opportunity to power down both engine units. Lt. Commander Uhura reports that the USS* ***Faragut [sic]*** *made readings of three Klingon battle cruisers on the Klingon side of the border at KBG78, but feels that they are only maintaining their routine border patrols. Kirk out."*

So begins one of the adventures in ***Star Trek – The Correspondence Game***, one of the most interesting new games on the play-by-mail scene.

With their new science fiction PBM, Entertainment Concepts Inc. (ECI) presents players with the opportunity to captain their own starship – either the *Enterprise* herself or another comparable Federation heavy cruiser. The game is role-playing in format, based on ECI's earlier ***Silverdawn*** game system.

A player begins by signing up for either the *Enterprise* or another ship (which he may name). ECI responds with the player kit, which contains:

- the *Captain's Guide*, an easy-to-read 24-page, 8½" x 11" booklet explaining the Heavy Cruiser, potential Starfleet missions, and the rules for submitting orders to ECI.
- a *Crew Roster*, an 8½" x 44" print-out of the 400 crew members on your starship, organized by ship sections. Each crewman has a code number, ratings on a scale of 1-10 for his Skill (profession), Strength, Quickness, Endurance and Intuition, and may or may not include similar ratings for Combat, Diplomacy, and General Knowledge. (James T. Kirk is code 1, Skill 11, Strength 7, Quickness 10, Endurance 8, Intuition 10, Combat 8, Diplomacy 9 and General Knowledge 9 – on my printout, at least.)
- the *Ship's Technical Description*, listing twenty ship systems (Bridge, Photon Tubes, Life Support) and rating them from 50 to 100 (and sometimes over 100 . . . 100 is a "model" ship). The number reflects the chances of the system operating under stress situations.
- and your first turn, a two-page computer print-out consisting of a Captain's Log, current Starfleet orders, and a Narrative presenting the current adventure.

The startling thing is that ***Star Trek*** is a *solitaire* game! Although there may be scores of other starship captains on dozens of *Enterprises* or other starships, perhaps in the exact same adventure, starships *do not* have any interaction. Entertainment Concepts Inc. has taken an old play-by-mail tradition – that PBM games can easily hold dozens or hundreds of players in the same game – and successfully stood it on its head.

As for the Narratives themselves, since the same adventure may be played by hundreds of players now and in the future, saying much about what I have seen would ruin their play. Players may be presented with rescue missions, exploration, investigation, military raids and adventures, planetary defense missions, diplomatic and relief expeditions. The printout presents the facts which lead up to the situation (you were on patrol when a signal came in . . .), lists the known facts, and breaks off when the player has enough to make his decision.

"My fist slammed down on the intercom button on the arm of the command chair. 'Scotty! That hunk of debris coming across our bow – get a Reverse-field tractor beam on that thing ***now****! Repel it!' I stepped down and placed a hand on Pav Chekov's shoulder, trying to steady my voice as I instructed, 'Mr. Chekov, lock phasers again on that chunk and, if the tractor beam doesn't repel it, fire and maintain fire until it is vaporized.' Then to Sulu I said, 'Mr. Sulu, put every ounce of impulse power to work and come about – try to get out of the path of that thing, or at least present the smallest possible target for it.' . . . I turned back to face LCDR Uhura, whose eyes were fixed on the viewscreen watching that debris heading for our path. 'Mr. Uhura, pipe to all decks: This is Captain Kirk – damage control, stand by all sections. All decks stand by for possible impact. Kirk out.' . . . Kirk out, I thought bitterly. Out of solutions, out of answers, out of time, out of luck."*

–Karen Rhodes, player orders (as published in ***Priority One****)*

Players' orders need not be as clever as those written by Miss Rhodes, though the games do become more fun as you throw yourself into it. Orders are limited to three text pages or 800 words, and are supposed to be divided into four parts: Recommended Promotions and Decorations, Ship Repairs and Maintenance Instructions, After the Fact Precautions, and Narrative Orders. (In practice, you will seldom need most parts on the average turn.)

Precautions "after the fact" deserve a few words. Occasionally, the Gamemaster will take action *for* you – for instance, sending a landing party to rescue plague victims from a strange world. Players may give the full orders that they would have given if they had the chance – in the

case cited, perhaps stating that the plague victims were immediately placed in quarantine and that the landing party wore sealed environment suits.

On the first turn, a player must also name any aliens (Vulcans, Andorians, Tellarites and Avians) and, if he does not command the *Enterprise*, name his Command Officers.

Technical Equipment Sheets are provided in case a player desires a piece of equipment not covered in the Captain's Guide – he may submit an outline and hope for Gamemaster approval.

ECI will respond within two to three weeks with a new two-page computer-printed Narrative plus a Status Report sheet covering crew injuries and casualties, ship section efficiency (1-100%) and condition (Green/Yellow/Red), and Alert Status. The new material will begin with the same adventure title, followed by a chapter number indicating how many turns you've spent on this adventure so far.

This, in a nutshell, is ***Star Trek – The Correspondence Game***. Players go from adventure to adventure, submitting orders and receiving turns. There are no deadlines, so players can take as long as they like to decide on their actions. The turns always cost the same amount, regardless of special actions or predicaments. A simple newssheet, *Priority One*, provides players with a monthly page of new technical equipment, excerpts from actual player orders, answers to questions, contests, and background information on alien races and cultures.

"Then the ***Enterprise*** *made a tight turn and flashed across the enemy ship's course. Precisely timed, the phasers shot out their beams of destructions [**sic**]. The other ship shuddered from the force of the blow, and the second burst of phaser fire broke thru! The ship lurched off its course and went dark for a moment before the emergency batteries took over and shone a dim red glow thru its ports.*

"Kirk again went into action. 'Transporter room, get busy on those assault teams!'"

*–**Star Trek** printout*

The ***Star Trek*** game system cannot be faulted in its performance – the Gamemaster-with-computer system seems to cover all problems, and there were no glitches that I could find. Rules glitches, that is.

The only complaint I have is in the way player orders are implemented. Four examples from my experience:

- Encountering two unknown vessels, I ordered two landing parties to board the one vessel. The other vessel I left alone. The Gamemaster, however, placed a third landing party on the vessel I wanted to leave alone. That landing party later became trapped by hostile aliens.
- I ordered Captain Kirk to beam down with a landing party. He instead remained on the bridge.
- Going into battle, I gave orders to fight at long range with photon torpedoes (my best-rated weapon). Instead, the *Enterprise* closed to short range and used phaser fire. The portion of the enemy ship I ordered targeted for special destruction was instead left untouched.
- At the end of one adventure, Kirk was given the opportunity to obtain a secret weapon in return for violating Starfleet orders. Rather than presenting me with the decision, the printout merely informed me that my Kirk had agreed to the violation.

Some of the problems can perhaps be explained. The extra landing party led to further developments in the adventure which I might otherwise have missed. The altered fighting orders allowed me to capture an enemy vessel virtually intact. Kirk's decision which was made for me was the decision I would probably have made, if I had been given the opportunity. As for Captain Kirk remaining on the bridge, I imagine that the computer program did not have my option programmed into it.

Nevertheless, the gamemastering problems in ***Star Trek*** mar an otherwise excellent game. I felt boxed in at times, and at other times wondered if my orders really counted. It was still fun, but less of a real game.

Yet ***Star Trek – The Correspondence Game*** is also a pioneering effort that may lead to an entirely new type of play-by-mail game – the solitaire role-playing adventure. Such a game is easier to run than a multi-player game, more efficient since the same adventure can be used repeatedly, and has the potential to be a fiction-quality experience. When play-by-mail games finally break into the play-by-computer (play-by-telephone) market, such games as ***Star Trek*** may be leading the way.

Unfortunately, ***Star Trek*** needs tinkering with in order to reach its full potential.

Star Trek – The Correspondence Game *is by Entertainment Concepts Inc., 6923 Pleasant Drive, Charlotte, NC 28211, under exclusive license from Paramount. Player kit, $6. Turns, $4 each. Additional starships, $4 each.* **SG**

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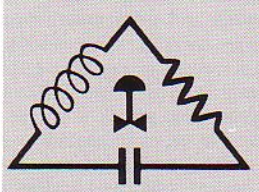

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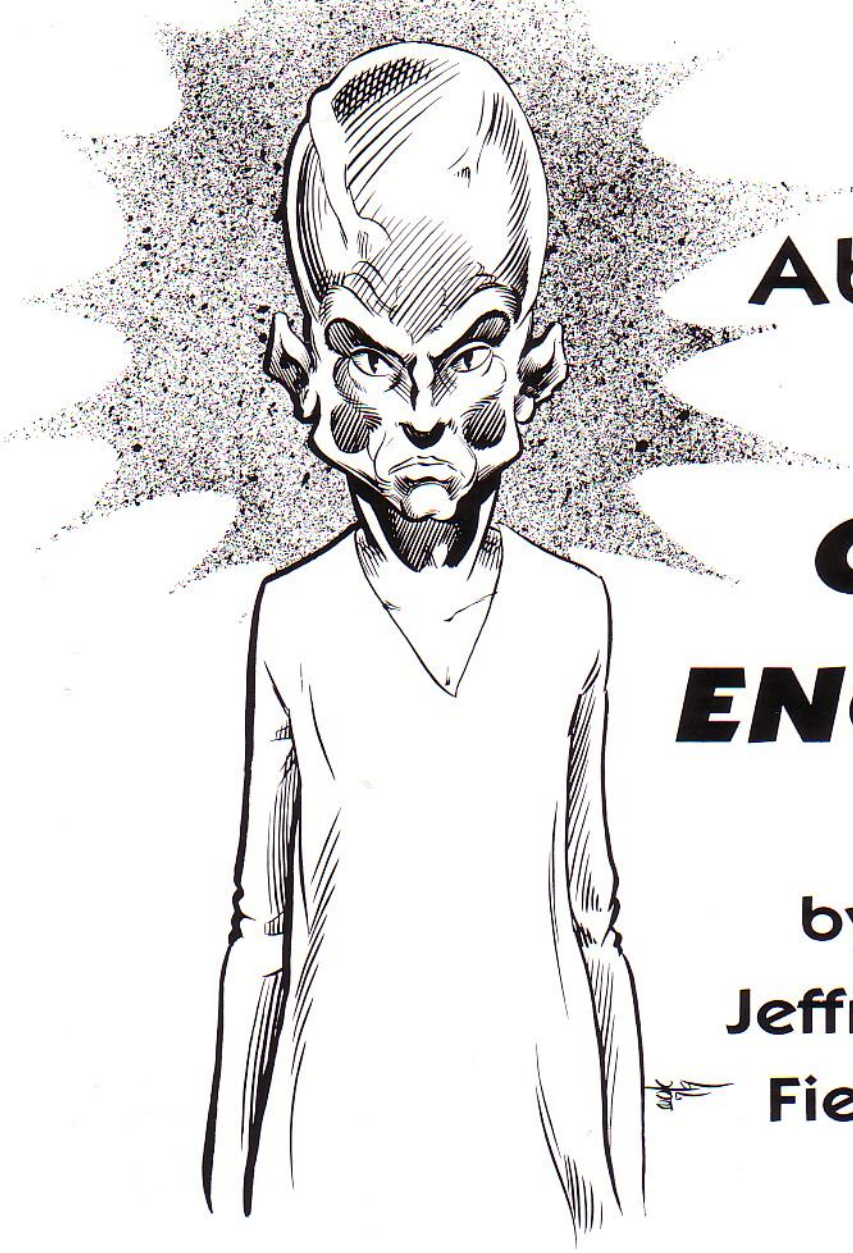


Aberrations in COSMIC ENCOUNTER

by Jeffrey Field

aberration *(ab-e-ra-shen), n. 2. deviation from a standard or ordinary type; abnormal structure or development.*

Cosmic Encounter is a game of chance, strategy, diplomacy, and, most of all, confusion. Yet amid expansion sets and backstabbing turmoil, the game retains its playability. This is the mark of a game that will never die.

Both of the following variants work best with three or more players, though they are playable with two opponents. These variants will refer to game components such as moons, lucre, or kickers from the Expansion Sets. This does not necessarily imply that a given set is required for play of the variant system.

Galactic Expansion

This variant represents the spread of the alien races when each was still young and undeveloped. These are expanding races, and everyone begins the game as an expanding player. Eventually, each race will develop to its full potential and become established. The pace of this growth varies, and the necessary criteria to becoming established are detailed below.

Game Preparation: Each player begins the game as an expanding player. He gets a system hex and a *star disc*, which should be placed in the system white side up; it will be flipped when the player becomes established. *Moons* are set up but not looked at, even by the player who owns them; they will be revealed normally when occupied. Each player starts the game with six *lucre*, but no income. Once those six lucre are gone, the player is broke until he becomes established. Eight *tokens* of each player are placed amongst any *four* planets in the player's system. Finally, *alien powers* are determined in the usual manner, but each is set aside, not used while the player is still expanding. We found the Hidden Power variation described in the rules to be especially fun with this variant.

The Play: Each player is dealt a seven-card hand and play occurs almost normally. Expanding players do not get a lucre income and may not use their alien powers. The major exception to standard play is the Expansion Rule, which symbolizes the young and poor races' susceptibility to high warfare costs and the accessibility of planets to inferior warp drives. The Expansion Rule decrees that as an offensive challenger, the expanding player must attack a planet on which the defensive player, as indicated by the destiny pile, has a base, unless his own color came up in the destiny pile, and *unless* the offensive expanding player plays an attack card of 15 or greater, in which case he may attack any planet or moon in the system. As play proceeds, each time a player wins a challenge as main player, whether offensive or defensive, he may bring one or two of his offboard tokens into play. These tokens are placed anywhere the player has a base.

An expanding player cannot win the game. The winner is the player to become *established* and then fulfill game victory conditions. An established player is a player who has all eight offboard tokens in play and has bases on all five of his system's planets – i.e., to become established, a player must win at least four challenges and have bases on all of his home planets. Once established, a player flips his star disc over. At this point he may (1) look at the moons in his system, (2) gain a standard lucre income, (3) reveal and use his alien power (subject to standard rules), and (4) ignore the Expansion Rule, since he is now a fully developed power and threat to the Cosmos. Once a player is established, he remains so, even if he loses his home planets.

Bigotry

This *Cosmic Encounter* variant is a direct reversal of the standard game. Rather than attempting to gain five bases outside of his system and thus spread across the universe, each player is trying to rid his beloved system of encroaching races. Players set up by distributing ten of their tokens among any of their opposition's planets, with at least two tokens per system. After all players have distributed their ten tokens, each places his remaining ten on any planets he wishes in his home system.

The game is then carried out normally, with a simple change of the victory condition. The winner is the player who first rids his system, including moons, of all other players' tokens. This is regardless of the number of external bases a player may have.

Do not use this variant with the Dictator, the Will, or other powers that ignore the destiny pile.

Other Alterations

A simple variation which changes the game dramatically is to require the winner to have not only five external bases, but bases on all five of his home planets as well. This rule is more than just an application of the Schizoid's power, for it alters play greatly. Defense becomes more important and the Rebirth edict a very useful commodity. This variation tends to lengthen game time and, consequently, makes the game more bloodthirsty.

The variants described above can be combined with each other and the standard rules to create a large variety of unique games. For instance, one could add the five-home-planets win condition to the Galactic Expansion variant. Or combine Galactic Expansion and Bigotry, requiring players to win as per Bigotry once they have become established.

A seventh-player variant is possible with the advent of the ***Cosmic Encounter*** Expansion Set 7. Instead of using the Zilch or Shark, as described in Expansion Set 4, a seventh player could be the Warpish, a race which sets up around the warp rather than on a planet hex. This, however, calls for an additional token set. Token and disc sets are available from Eon for $1.50, but will have to be spray-painted a different color (gloss black looks nice) before the tokens are punched out. Other games have sets similar to the ***Cosmic Encounter*** tokens: Avalon Hill's ***Dune*** has nearly identical counters. Or, one can make the tokens by hand; washers make good templates for cutting.

New Powers

Fisher – You have the power to *net*. At the start of your challenge, you may ask a player for a type of card (edict, flare, kicker, Z-edict, attack, or compromise). He must then show you all such cards he has in his hand. You then choose one of these cards for your own. When asking for attack cards, you must specify a numeric range with a spread of no greater than five (i.e., "Attack cards from 11 to 16"). *Do not use in a two-player game.*

Ghoul – You have the power to *plunder*. When you are involved in a challenge as a main player or ally and your side wins, you gain a bonus for each token (player or ally, friend or foe) that went to the warp (or void) during the challenge for whatever reason. The bonus takes the form of a card from the deck, a token from the warp, or a lucre from the box.

Spore – You have the power of *conveyance*. At the start of each player's turn, if you have tokens in the warp, you may attempt to make that player your carrier host. You declare the attempt and play is suspended while a challenge is carried out between you and the possible carrier. You each play a challenge card; your tokens in the warp are totaled into your attack, but your opponent does not get this bonus. No allies are allowed. If you win, the host must release one of your tokens (rather than his own) at the start of his challenge. Your token then accompanies him into the challenge. If your carrier has no tokens in the warp, he still releases one of yours.

In addition to these new powers, I have listed some notes concerning Steve Jackson's article "New Characters for ***Cosmic Encounter***" in *Space Gamer* 57, 1982.

Diplomat – Diplomat should be renamed **Turncoat** to avoid confusion with the Eon power of that name from Expansion Set 2. Do not use in a two-player game.

Teleport – Do not use in a game with the Dictator or the Will.

Blade – Do not use in a game with either the Magnet or the Crystal.

Card Addendum

Galactic Zap: The ***Cosmic Encounter*** rules say that Cosmic Zap stops the use of powers, and powers alone. Recently, Expansion Set 8 was released; it included the Flarezap, an edict used to stop the use of flares. This leaves moons and other edicts uncovered (although there is a Moonzap moon). Thus, we present the Galactic Zap. This edict is played to prevent the use of a moon or the play of another edict. If used on a moon, all tokens on that moon must be transferred to other bases. If used on an edict, both cards are discarded.

An alternate method to the Galactic Zap is to create a Moonzap edict which, when played, prevents a moon power from being used and causes all tokens to be relocated off of that moon. To prevent the use of edicts, a new line of edicts is created, the Z-edicts. Each new Z-edict is played on an edict, both cards are discarded.

All zap cards are covered by the Unzap, an Eon edict from Expansion Set 8. The Unzap should be classified as a Z-edict and it is suggested that you make another Unzap to balance the new zaps. "And what stops the use of a Z-edict?" you ask. Why, an Unzap, of course. The Z-edicts:

Antidote – A serum which combats **The Plague** before the evil disease spreads too far.

Certificate of Merit – What promised to be a great reward is revealed as hollow and empty: **Victory Boon** is worthless.

Conviction – Strong beliefs override any attempt at **Emotion Control**.

Famine – The invaders' rape of the land causes the new **Rebirth** settlements to starve and fail.

Illusion – The sought-for card is just a figment in the imagination of the **Finder**.

Macroscope – The intimidating confusion of the Cosmos destroys **Sanity**.

Overload – Weak fuses cause the **Force Field** to collapse.

Paradox – Some say time is a cycle and events cannot be changed; thus, **Timegash** is useless.

Rush Hour – The mad dash of panicky tokens from the warp jams the **Mobius Tubes** and **Warp Break** while they are open.

Sieve – Cupped hands make a poor vessel; the cards of the **Keeper** dribble through his fingers.

The Brownian Card: This is a wild card and does not fit under any category – it is not susceptible to the Plague or Fisher power. With its random ways, the Brownian Card can serve as any of the following cards: Cosmic Zap/Unzap, Emotion Control/Conviction, Force Field/Overload, Mobius Tubes/Rush Hour, The Plague/Antidote, Stellar Gas/Halogens, Rebirth/Famine, Timegash/Paradox, Victory Boon/Certificate of Merit, Finder/Illusion, Keeper/Sieve, Sanity/

Macroscope, Warp Break, Flarezap, Moonzap, Galactic Zap, a Kicker 2, an Attack 30, an Attack 3, or a Compromise card.

New Moons

In Expansion Set 5, The Moons, Eon has left five out of their 100 moons blank and called them New Moons. What does a game owner do with those moons? Here are some ideas to fill in the blanks.

96. Entropy (I): The player(s) with the greatest number of external bases lose(s) one of them (his choice). Tokens are transferred to other bases.

97. Moon Dance (C): Treat this moon like the Moon Wraith (#87), except tokens on the victimized planet are placed on the moon and this moon can be attacked while on a planet.

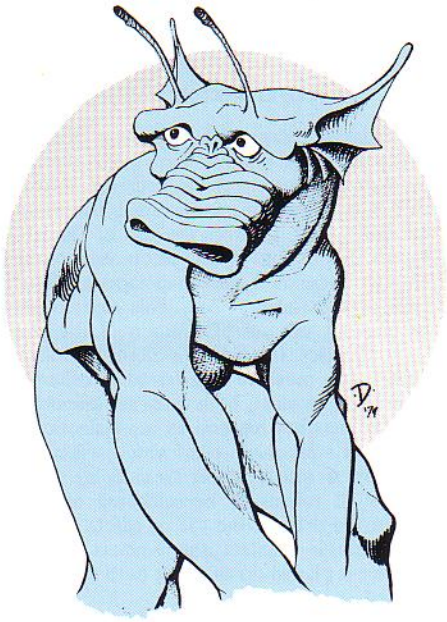
98. Snare (S): You may not voluntarily remove your base from this moon. You must continue to occupy it until you lose it to an attacker or are removed by some power.

99. Axis (C): While this moon is occupied, challenges will be "rotated." When the cards are revealed, the numbers on the attack card(s) are added. If the result is even, the challenge is played normally. However, if the total is odd, the attack cone rotates 180 degrees and any tokens in the offensive end are spewed into the warp. To fill this vacuum, all tokens on the attacked planet are sucked into the offensive end and they begin a challenge with the original defensive player as main player. Defensive ally tokens remain on the rotating cone. Discard this moon after the first rotation occurs.

100. Pearly Gates (C): While this moon is occupied, any tokens normally sent to the warp (or void) are instead flipped to reveal the white side and placed on the central hex outside the warp. At the start of his turn, each player may load the attack cone with one or two angel tokens in addition to his usual forces. Losing angel tokens go to the warp (or void) and enter normal play. Those on a planet aid the current defensive player. Angel tokens do not assume alien powers such as Macron or Virus and are neutral towards game victory conditions.

Flare Interpolation

The following flares are for alien powers from various sources that were not published with flare powers. The first two are from the seventh and eighth player powers from Expansion Set 4, most are from Steve Jackson (again,



Space Gamer 57), and the last three are from this article.

Zilch – Power to Kibitz. Wild: If you are not involved in a challenge as main player or ally, you may look at the hands of the main players and suggest a play to *one* of them. Super: None.

Shark – Power of Hunger. Wild: Before your first challenge of a turn, you may exchange one game factor (tokens, power, hand, moons, lucre) with another player. Super: None.

Apostle – Power to Convert. Wild: You may take one token of another player into the attack cone with you. This token must come from a planet on which you both share a base and is not considered an ally. Taking it may not strip him of a base. Super: At the start of your turn, you may convert all tokens on a planet at once, subject to normal restrictions.

Turncoat – Power to Shift. Wild: If you are an ally on the losing side of a challenge, you may save tokens from the warp by allowing the winning main player to draw a card from your hand for each token to be saved. Super: When you join an alliance and your side loses, you may convert all tokens on a planet at once, subject to normal restrictions.

Swarm – Power of Synergy. Wild: Your tokens are each worth 1½ times their number (round down). Thus, one token is worth 1, and four are worth 6. Super: You may use any or all of your ally's powers during a challenge.

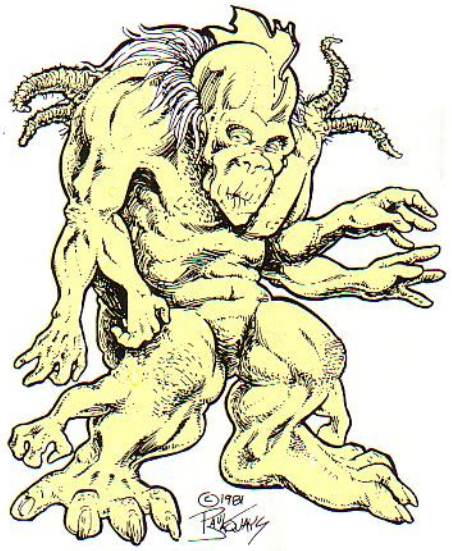
Twit – Power to Annoy. Wild: You may verbally harass players in the game by mimicking them, bragging about your playing, etc., in a high, nasal voice. If any player responds negatively he loses a token to the warp (his choice). Super: You may enter any challenge as an ally, uninvited, and nothing except Flarezap can prevent you.

Angel – Power of Love. Wild: Whenever you play a compromise card in a challenge, the result is a compromise and you must make a deal, regardless of your opponent's play. Super: If both you and your opponent play compromise cards (you must reveal yours) it is counted as a winning attack for you, no deals are made.

Fog – Power to Conceal. Wild: You need not abide revealing powers, such as the Mind, the Finder edict, or the Moonburst moon (#62). Super: Your power to conceal applies when you are attacking as well as defending.

Berserker – Power of Fear. Wild: As a main player in a challenge, you may frighten one token of your opponent's allies away. Super: In their berserk rage, each of your tokens counts as two in offensive challenges.

Wizard – Power of Illusion. Wild: You may increase or decrease the value of your opponent's attack card by 5. Super: You may create illusory forces. For each token you have as defensive player in a challenge, you may add another from other bases or the warp. Though counted in the challenge, these illusory tokens are not affected by the outcome; they are afterward returned to their origins.



Teleport – Power to Evade. Wild: If you are challenged on a planet which has other player's bases, you may make your challenger attack one of the others (his choice) by discarding a card. Super: When you evade, rather than a token going to the warp, it goes to the system to which your opponent was sent. If you do not have a base in this system, then the token is lost to the warp.

Stone – Power to Endure. Wild: As losing defensive player in a challenge, if you had more than one token on the lost base you may leave one token on that base. Super: Your endurance power applies to offensive challenges also, and, when sending half your tokens to the warp, round down instead of up.

Blade – Power to Divide. Wild: The value of your opponent's attack card is divided by 2. Super: After cards are played but before they are revealed, you may, as a main player, declare

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"one on one." This divides both sides' forces. The attack total for each side is divided by the number of tokens (including allies) on that side (round up). This split attack is then used to determine the challenge outcome.

Blivit – Power to Confuse. Wild: If you are not involved in a challenge you may, just before cards are played, send the attack cone to another system as determined by the destiny pile, but the same player is attacked there. If the defending player does not have a base in the new system, another disc is turned. You lose one token for each destiny disc turned *beyond* the first. Super: When you are offensive player, you may, after allies are chosen but before cards are played, attack a different base on the same planet.

Fisher – Power to Net. Wild: At the start of your challenge, you may draw a card from the hand of any one player. Super: At the start of your turn, you may reveal the top card of the deck. Each player must then give you one card from his hand of the same type. If you reveal an attack card, specify a range of 5 in which that card fits. The revealed card is then discarded, unused.

Ghoul – Power to Plunder. Wild: If you are involved on the winning side of a challenge you may draw one card from the losing player's hand for every token you had in the challenge. Super: If you are the winning main player, take an additional bonus from any players on the losing side for each token you had in the challenge (tokens can be taken from the warp or from a token-stealing power like the Void).

Spore – Power of Conveyance. Wild: If you give one or more attack cards to the offensive player in a challenge, he must accept one of your tokens for each card given as allies. Super: If you gain a carrier host, you may add up to three tokens from bases into the attack cone. Ally-stopping powers or Force Field cannot stop you.

All these flares and new Z-edicts will require you to make cards before play. Blank cards which can be typed on (yes, the flare descriptions will fit if typed single-space with an elite typewriter) are available from Eon for 20 cents each. Cards and token and disc sets (specify color) can be ordered from Eon Products, Inc., RFD 2, Sheldon Rd., Barre, MA 01005. (Include $2.00 for shipping; Massachusetts residents add 5% tax.)

A cheaper but more complicated process can be used for the flare cards. Begin by assigning a specific card from the regular deck to a cardless flare power ("Attack 12 is the Ghoul flare"). Shuffle these cards into the flare deck and deal out flares normally to determine player powers. Then, using flares that weren't dealt out, replace the regular cards that were ("Now the Zombie flare is the Ghoul flare"). A list of these conversions should be clearly posted where everyone can clearly see it – we can't have Bob trying to use the Plant wild flare when it's really the Twit flare. These flares and the regular cards used before are shuffled into the playing deck and the game proceeds normally (or as normal as a ***Cosmic Encounter*** game can be).

aberration *(ab-e-ra-shen), n. 3. temporary mental disorder.*

Thanks to the Island Playtesters: Adam DiGleria, Ken Davis, Jim and Pam Frederickson, Eric "Gambler" Green. **SG**

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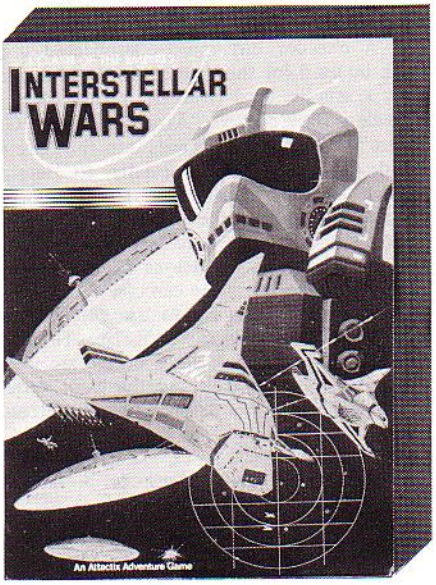
INTERSTELLAR WARS

Featured Review by Tony Watson



Interstellar Wars is the first science-fiction offering from a new adventure game publisher: Attactix/Emithill, a British company. The game's high physical quality and relatively good distribution reflect how far the British game industry has come; the $20 price tag indicates how expensive imports can be.

Interstellar Wars is a two-player strategic game of galactic empires in conflict. The map depicts the Akiri Empire, divided into seven provinces, and portions of four provinces of the Sende Empire. The two empires are clashing over the control of forty star systems connected by a web of transit routes. Each player fields a fleet of starships, including scouts, fighters, stellar cruisers and galactic cruisers. A main feature of the game is the relatively detailed set of rules for handling fleet battles.

While I found the game's components to not quite justify the substantial asking price, they *are* first-rate. The mapboards are mounted and backed (like Avalon Hill boards *used* to be) and measure 16" by 23½" when butted together. Each of the star systems bears a name and factors for defense and refueling capacity. The game's one hundred counters are equally attractive. They are large-sized (5/8" square) and bear attack and defense factors, a stylized ship symbol denoting one of the four classes of ships in the game, an identification number, and (in the case of command ships) stacking value and stacking/combat bonus. The counters are back-printed to denote an unfueled status when using the more advanced rules. A single counter serves as a marker to indicate in which star system a battle is taking place.

The components are rounded out with an eight-page rules booklet, which is divided into basic, intermediate, and advanced rules, illustrated with examples of play, and contains the orders of battle for the various scenarios. The game also includes a six-sided die. All of the above materials come in a game box, flashily illustrated with a montage of starships in combat and the rather stern visage of a space-suited figure.

From its transit routes (jump lines) to its fleet lines of battle, ***Interstellar Wars*** in many ways seems modeled after ***Imperium***, the classic science fiction game from GDW. What remains to be seen is whether this game can also bring together the elements of strategic movement, tactical fleet combat, stellar economics, and contextual considerations in a grand strategic game.

The spacecraft represented in the game are divided into four classes: scouts, fighters, stellar cruisers and galactic cruisers. The first two types are referred to as "light" units and may move farther than heavy units (the two cruiser classes) and engage in skirmish fighting during fleet battles. As one may expect, light units generally have both lower attack and defense factors than cruisers.

In the movement phase, starships move along transit routes from star to star; light units may move two stars, heavy units only one. In the basic rules, movement is as simple as that, but under the intermediate rules the complication of refueling is added. After movement, ships must refuel in the system to which they have moved, using that system's refueling capacity (which is measured in the number of ships that may refuel per turn in that system). However, a system must be controlled to use its refueling capacity, necessitating that the attacker be victorious in order to refuel. The interconnecting web of star systems gives some systems key strategic importance, acting as choke points and/or hubs for movement purposes, while the fuel rules force the players to plan their offensives carefully.

In the basic game, ships may only stack three per system (for some inadequately justified reason) making for rather small engagements. This is rectified in the later rules by the use of command ships – ships within each class that, in addition to their normal combat and movement capabilities, can increase the stacking capacity of a system considerably, up to eight or nine ships. Fleets are formed around these command ships, which, in addition to their increased stacking ability, have a bonus that can be used to further increase stacking or adjust die rolls in the combat phase. The inopportune loss of a command ship during a battle can tip the scales decisively and often blunt any offensive.

It is clear, however, that the most interesting feature of ***Interstellar Wars***, and that section to which the uncredited designer(s) have devoted the greater part of their energies, is the body of rules dealing with fleet combat. It seems that the intent was to create a combat procedure for a strategic game that retained a tactical flavor and gave the players the impression of great lines of starships coming together and exchanging salvos of missiles and energy weapons fire.

When ships of the opposing players are in the same system, the combat procedure is initiated. This begins with a process of skirmish combat. Light and heavy units are differentiated in the game not only by their combat values, but by the roles they play during combat. Only light units participate in skirmish combat, forming

skirmish lines and exchanging fire. The player with the fewest units places them in a line, and then the opposing player pairs his units with this line, placing any extra ships in a second line. Combat then takes place with each of the ships in a pair firing at one another. A die roll is made for each ship, adding its combat factor to the result; if the total exceeds the defense factor of the target, it is destroyed. Both vessels may fire before any losses are taken. Ships in the second line fire and are fired upon with a favorable die modifier. Skirmish combat rounds continue until one side or the other disengages, by either retiring on its battlefleet (any heavy units in the system) or withdrawing from the system entirely. If light units fall back on their fleet cruisers, then battlelines are formed once again, this time with the big ships participating in the combat.

In the intermediate and advanced games, this combat process is modified by requiring ships to line up in the order of their identification number, ensuring that like units fire at one another. The fleet engagements are considerably more interesting in these later sets of rules due to the fact that command ships allow larger stacks of ships, and thus bigger battles, and their combat bonus adds a useful option to the combat process. The advanced rules offer a truly innovative set of guidelines on combat tactics. Using this optional rule, each participant in a battle chooses from a list of combat tactics, either conventional attack and rapid advance (for the attacker) or conventional defense, counter-attack, and delay (for the defender). The intersection of the two options determines the nature of the battle, such as die modifiers for combat, retreats, when and if battlefleet lines are formed.

Conversely, economic aspects of strategic space warfare are glossed over. There is no production per se, but instead a rather simple system of replacement. In the basic game, the players may replace a destroyed unit for every provincial capital they control. While a bit simplistic, this method at least ties the replacement of ships to the control of star systems, ostensibly the prizes to be won in the conflict. The intermediate game substitutes a die roll to determine the number of units that may be replaced per turn; capitals serve only as staging areas for the incoming units. The replacement system works out all right in play, but it's unfortunate that economics couldn't be worked into the game in a more meaningful way.

Victory conditions in ***Interstellar Wars*** depend on the scenario being played. Since all of the scenarios postulate an attack by the Sende Empire on the Akiri Empire, territory and the destruction of enemy units figure prominently in determining victory. Most of the territory on the board is Akiri, the few Sende systems serving mainly as the jumping off points for the attack, and the battle is usually for control of the Akiri Empire's systems. Provincial capitals are the usual determinants of victory, though a sudden-death loss can occur if a player has too many eliminated units.

Interstellar Wars is not without chrome. In the intermediate and advanced games, star systems have intrinsic defense and attack factors and must be assaulted by the attacker to gain control. Other rules include the Pirates of Hamrinon, who serve as either impediments to movement through their system or, optionally, as contributors to the controlling player's forces. In the intermediate game, the beleaguered Akiri player can call in the reserves, in the form of a Strategic Patrol Force, should the situation be dire enough.

On the whole, however, ***Interstellar Wars*** seems to lack something. One possible answer is the absence of background to the situation. We are told that the Sende Empire is invading the Akiri Empire, but that's about all we know. We can assume that greed and territory are the motives, but a little more background on the origins of the war would have been appreciated. This lack of contextual information made it difficult for me to get very interested in the situation or the sides involved.

Perhaps a more important problem is the fact that most of the rules serve as rather insubstantial supports to the fleet combat system. This aspect of the game is certainly the most interesting and represents significant development in this area of game mechanics. The skirmish and battleline combats give the feel of a tactical engagement, but this is not enough. ***Interstellar Wars*** is a strategic game, in the final analysis, and in this capacity it is professional but colorless, playable but less than exciting. Considering the cost, there are more intriguing and interesting games to spend 20 bucks on.

As a first SF game from a new company, ***Interstellar Wars*** is adequate, but not outstanding. It certainly avoids the appellation of "turkey" – but it hits wide of the "classic" mark as well.

Interstellar Wars *(Attactix); $20.00. No designer listed. Components include an eight-page rules book, a 16" x 23½" full-color, mounted mapboard in two sections, 100 die-cut counters, one die, boxed. Two players; two to three hours. Published 1982.* **SG**

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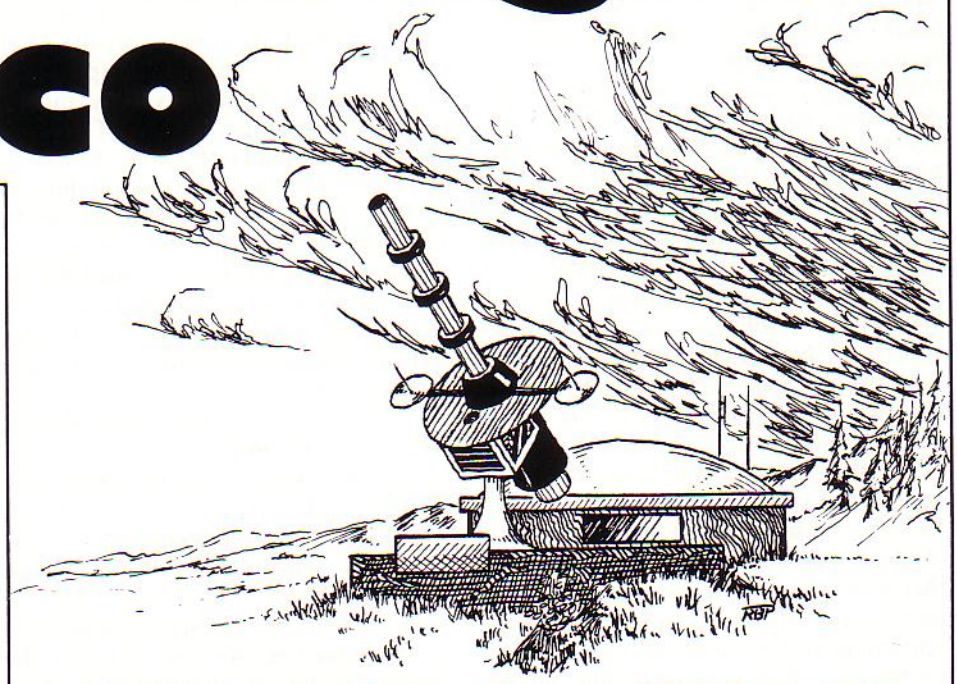
The Finagle Fiasco



fiction by Don Sakers

Yes, I remember the Murphy episode. Of course, I was not Grand Master of Euler at the time – I was only Assistant Christensen Professor of Topology. Still, I don't suppose anyone will ever forget that time, when the Math Institute here on Euler was all that stood between the Galaxy and total domination by a sadistic megalomaniac.

What's that? Oh, yes, I know the Psychology Institute has done penance for allowing Khar-Davii to take over. And I understand that they say it can never happen again. Well, I wonder – psychology is not of course an exact discipline, like math.

Eh? Yes, the Murphy episode. As I recall, it was shortly after the spring term had begun. I had trouble with some of my displays; the Twenty-Dimension Simulator had developed a singularity, and simply would not accept fields with more than eighty operations. Maintenance told me that the entire system would have to be shut down for reprogramming, and I went to the Grand Master for approval. She was conversing on the hyperwave; I waited until she was done. In due time she opened the privacy hood and smiled at me. "Ah, Professor Yagwn. How are you?"

"Fine, Madam. And yourself?"

She sighed. "I could be better, Yagwn. You've heard of this Khar-Davii, who calls himself the Conqueror? Well, it appears that he has taken over the Galactic Council and killed the Co-ordinator. He has proclaimed himself Monarch of Humanity, and the inhabited worlds are falling all over their own feet to surrender to him."

I recalled hearing something about the matter on the news. "Are his weapons that formidable?"

"Apparently so. Euler is the only planet that has not yielded. I was just talking with the outlying Galactic Traffic station – Khar-Davii's fleet is even now heading toward this world." She glanced at a data screen on her desk. "Ah, excuse me. The fleet has arrived. We are surrounded."

I had no opportunity to voice an opinion. There was a bright flash of light, and suddenly the image of a corpulent human man appeared in the center of the Grand Master's office. Behind him were banks of machinery tended by warriors in full battle dress.

"I am Khar-Davii, the Conqueror. Your miserable planet has refused to accept my rule. You will surrender to me now or I will destroy your world."

I suppressed a grin; the Grand Master did not bother to hide her amusement. "I hardly think it is a miserable world. I rather like it. Conqueror, your plan of conquest would interfere with our spring term, and I'm sure that the commotion would upset many of our scholars."

Khar-Davii narrowed his brows. "As I was told – you are totally out of touch with the real universe. Mathematicians and philosophers – not a practical being in the bunch."

The Grand Master lost her smile. One thing that always bothered her was the accusation that Euler was out of touch with reality. To her, math was the highest form of reality. She stood and faced Khar-Davii.

"My dear Conqueror, I will not allow you to bother Euler. If you wish to attack, then do so – but let me show you something of our defenses first." She touched a button, and a screen behind her showed the image of a great cannon.

I drew in my breath sharply at the sight.

"And what is that machine, Grand Master?" Khar-Davii asked with a smile. "Will it shoot strings of numbers at us?"

The Grand Master answered with another smile. "No doubt, Conqueror, a man with your military background has heard of the Murphy laws? That which can go wrong, *will* go wrong. Here we have them formulated as a theorem, and implemented as a weapon."

"And this is your defense?"

She spread her hands and regarded him as though he were a simpleton – which seemed readily apparent. "Long ago we investigated the Murphy Laws completely. This Machine amplifies their effects. If you attack us, your guns will fail to fire, your ships will suffer instrument breakdowns, your most trusted officers will trip and accidentally sound recall orders. You could never beat us."

Khar-Davii dissolved in a fit of laughter. "My fleet has been listening to this conversation – now they know what 'terrible weapon' Euler will use against them." He stopped chuckling. "Grand Master, prepare for your death. Fleet – Attack!"

The attack did not last long.

Since I had a little time to spare, I watched it on the viewscreens from the Grand Master's office. After twenty minutes or so, only the Conqueror's flagship was left in fighting condition. It was not too long afterward that Khar-Davii's image reappeared in the office. The Conqueror was harried and bedraggled, and there was fear in his eyes.

"Can I help you, Conqueror?" the Grand Master asked.

"Enough. Enough. Turn off that machine. We will sue for peace. I will not attack your planet any more."

"Fine." She pressed another button. "Your treaty has been logged. We have other weapons that we can use against you, should you try to break your word. I will thank you now to take the remnants of your fleet away without bothering us . . . we have important work to do."

"You will not try to prevent me from ruling the Galaxy? Your Murphy Machine is a more formidable weapon than any I possess."

She smiled. "Poor, poor Conqueror. You should have taken more mathematics classes. Deductive reasoning would have helped you. The Murphy Machine worked perfectly – as soon as it was turned on, things started to go wrong. The first problem that developed was the failure of the Machine itself."

"Failure . . .?"

"Yes." She laughed. "It was the superstition of your crews that defeated you, Khar-Davii. They believed that they could not win, and so they did not."

Khar-Davii snarled, and his image vanished. Viewscreens showed his ships limping away from Euler.

"We shall have no more trouble from him. The memory of his defeat and his fear of a recurrence will prevent him from returning. He will attempt to rule the Galaxy and will forget about Euler." She shook her head. "What can I do for you, Yagwn?"

"I need permission to shut down the Twenty-Dimension Simulator for reprogramming."

"Very well, I will make the necessary notifications."

"Thank you." I turned to go, then paused at the door. "About the Murphy Machine, Grand Master. Do you think it was kind to lie to him so?"

"Kinder than letting him know what a terrible power he is really up against. He thinks the Machine unworkable." She shrugged. "Let *him* figure out why his empire dissolves so quickly."

Dismissing me, she bent her head back to her work. **SG**

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STARWEB

Secrets of the Web

by W.G. Armintrout

I've heard a disturbing rumor.

Some time ago, in *Space Gamer* 45 (November, 1981) I presented six tricks for improving your ***Starweb*** play. As some of you may recall, those six glorious nuggets were . . .

- *Expand Fast!*
- *Get the Homeworld Producing!*
- *Find a Partner!*
- *Watch the Point Scores!*
- *Backstab When Called For!*
- *Make a Game-Plan!*

Well, concrete results are coming in now. Those of you who read that article and took its advice to heart have now finished your first games. I've little doubt that you've been successful, and I'm proud of you!

What? No, don't say that! You can't mean it – did you say . . . *boring*?

Boring! How dare you say that about a game like ***Starweb***, a venerable old warhorse of PBM, a miracle and my passion! Why, if I had anything to say about it, Rick Loomis would be inducted into the Hall of Fame! How can you . . .

Actually, you might have a point. In ***Starweb***, Winning and Having A Good Time are not necessarily the same thing! The things which bring points – like hauling raw materials, converting population, or dropping Planet Buster Bombs on friendly worlds – are not necessarily *fun*. (Fun, as we all know secretly in our hearts, lies in tromping on enemy star fleets and actually destroying some other player!)

Therefore I've gone back into my ***Starweb*** archives to gather together another set of tips – five in all, this time, masterful tips designed to let you win and *still* have fun in spite of it. So here they are:

SECRET #1
Grab It When You Can

(Or, always take advantage of the rookies.)

Let's face it. Once you know what you're doing in the game, half the fun lies in ripping off all the people who don't know what they're doing.

Example: I was in a game once as an empire builder, neighboring a second empire builder named BAKUFU. BAKUFU and I had been squabbling over our border and ownership of the worlds where we both showed up at the same time. Then, out of the blue, I received a Diplomatic Message from him: He was declaring me an "ally" as a friendly gesture.

I suppose that, if I had been truly civilized, I would have sent him a DM gently rebuffing him. (I didn't want him for an ally!)

Instead, like the heathen I am, I took the opportunity to slip a scout fleet across his border and locate his homeworld. Later, my real ally used that information to talk another player into attacking BAKUFU for us! (Fortunately, the invasion of BAKUFU forestalled BAKUFU's own long-planned attack on *me*.)

I suppose that the moral of this story is that it's a lot of fun to exploit other people's mistakes.

Another example: In that same game, that scout fleet escaped BAKUFU's wrath but found itself stranded with no way to get home. A poor "lost fleet." Therefore I got in contact with BAKUFU's neighbor, another empire builder named ZERD. Could I, I asked, save my fleet by bringing it home by way of her empire?

Being kind-hearted, she said "yes." She too was a first-time player.

So my scout fleet, on its way home, managed to make one or two "probes" of her empire before it returned to my bosom. Located her homeworld, too. Which was useful, later, when my allies and I decided to conquer it.

With a Web so full of kind-hearted people, I've considered deliberately "losing" a few fleets in my next games . . .

SECRET #2
The Sins of Omission

(Or, Don't Say It If You Don't Have To.)

If the truth be known, I don't like to lie. I'm not sure what the ethics are of lying in a game as opposed to lying in real life. I know that having a few good-hearted tricksters in a game always makes it more fun, but it's not something I can easily bring myself to do. Character flaw, I suppose.

Fortunately, I can get almost as much mileage out of merely "forgetting" to mention certain important facts to the other players . . .

Example: Kindness is a weapon. Referring back again to one of my favorite games, there was a merchant named GREGOR who was under attack from an empire builder named SPARTA. We made GREGOR a deal – we'd protect him from SPARTA, if he'd haul RMs for our four homeworlds and gift his homeworld over to us.

He did so, and we conquered SPARTA.

GREGOR was very pleased on the phone one time, and he happened to mention to me just how pleased he was with his fast-rising score. He gave me all the details.

Therefore I reported to my allies, and we rubbed the merchant out!

We had two things going for us – we didn't make any promises we didn't have to (we had no deal with GREGOR – we *had* protected him from SPARTA), and by being friendly to him we provided the opportunity for GREGOR to make a fatal assumption.

Another example: Back to ZERD, previously mentioned, who came under attack from a pirate called DENARK. Because I liked ZERD – she used to call up and we'd talk about the rigors of her chemistry courses in college – I prevented my colleagues from devouring her empire. (That's the flip side of being friendly – sometimes you get caught in your own snare.)

Well, I got hold of ZERD and proposed an interesting plan. It seemed that I owned, at the time, a corridor of worlds leading from ZERD's realm straight to DENARK's stars. I gave her the route, declared her "ally," and provided her with a gift fleet to sweeten the deal.

Therefore, ZERD sent the majority of her force on a sweep deep into DENARK's home territory.

And, when her forces were too deeply committed to pull back, my allies and I hit her with our gathered fleets and seized every world she had . . . except that she PBB'd her homeworld first.

Reactions of misled players vary. GREGOR stopped speaking to me. On the other hand, ZERD took it all in stride – we went on to collaborate against DENARK with her remaining fleets.

SECRET #3
Never Submit Gracefully

Sometimes, in ***Starweb***, you end up being forced into something you don't want to do.

Take DENARK. The reason he was able to attack ZERD was because I let him through a few of my worlds. The reason I let him through was due, as they say, to "an offer I couldn't refuse." DENARK was hemmed in by allies. He wanted to attack ZERD. I stood in his path. If I didn't get out of his way . . . well, then it would be me instead of ZERD in the frying pan.

So I found myself in what might be called a "forced" alliance. It's not an uncommon occurrence in ***Starweb***. People hate it.

The secret, of course, is to find some safe way to take it out on the player that's got you by the short hairs.

In DENARK's case, I was the perfect servant – I mapped out the route, gave him clearance, advised him exactly as to her forces and their locations. Except that I inflated my estimates of her fleet strength.

And then I tipped ZERD to run.

And then I helped ZERD counter-attack just as I had helped DENARK attack in the first place.

And then I attacked DENARK. (Just as I was attacking ZERD, in fact.)

They say that reputation means a lot in ***Starweb***. Well, my reputation as a trustworthy ally is second to none . . . but my "unwilling cooperation" leaves a great deal to be desired.

SECRET #4
Without Warning

(Or, if you're going to do something rotten there's no sense in letting everyone know about it beforehand.)

I used to be just as stupid as most people. In my very first game, playing an empire builder position, I found myself taking on the RM-hauling services of a merchant called GED. GED was like most merchants I've met – friendly, talkative, a real nice fellow.

Unfortunately, he began to make 740 points per turn. And it was only turn 14! And it was still rising!

Being naive, I politely informed him that I no longer needed his services.

Whereupon he got sore and stole two of my worlds. (Which he had given to me in the first place, however.) He still won the game, although my defection cost him four extra turns of play.

Therefore I have precious little sympathy for people who say things like, "confront your rotten ally and officially dissolve the alliance." Bosh!

I mean, just look at the case from a merchant's point of view. If the alliance is dissolved, he'll have a few fleets stuck in the middle of someone else's empire. What are his options? (a) Take them somewhere useful . . . but that'll take several turns and only be marginally helpful, or (b) Have some fun and give a rough time to the guy who let you go.

Harking back to GREGOR, the merchant whose demise I've already described, I suppose that in some ways our assault, *without warning*, was really the merciful thing. Our combined ambush/capture/shoot-out lasted two turns, and there was nothing GREGOR could do. Wasn't that far better than officially notifying him that we were after him, and then spending who-knows-how-many-turns, chasing his fleets about the Web?

A waste of his time, and ours.

That's why I perfer to strike, when I have to . . .

Without Warning.

SECRET #5
Do Unto Others . . . First

(Or, the Pre-Emptive Backstab. A subject of some controversy.)

If an alliance is breaking up, don't be left holding the bag. I learned that by experience. Once upon a time, I was the empire builder in an alliance – with a berserker and a pirate – that was winning a game. Our scores were rising in unison.

The pirate became greedy. I had been gifting worlds to him. Now, he began to take them. His score climbed dramatically.

To keep even, the berserker PBB'd more worlds and rushed his attack on an apostle. I speeded my conquest of an empire builder. We both wrote fiery letters to the pirate.

But, since I had no fleets in my home realm I couldn't stop him.

The pirate won the game. I took third, but my rating wasn't what I had been looking for.

Therefore, I am now a bit more prepared in case an ally goes rotten.

Example: I, the apostle BRIGAM, bordered three players – the pirate BALROG, the pirate RAIDER, and the merchant VANRIN. Because of the cylindrical shape of the WEB pattern, I had a very long frontier with BALROG – therefore, we allied. As for RAIDER, his small empire was a buffer zone between myself and the berserker ARKITE – therefore, we, too, allied.

RAIDER attacked VANRIN the merchant. In return for converts, I was providing the pirate with RMs from my larger empire. RAIDER took half of VANRIN's worlds.

VANRIN gifted his homeworld to BALROG. RAIDER, feeling he had earned it, demanded the HW from BALROG. BALROG refused. RAIDER attacked BALROG.

I had never before had two allies fighting each other. Besides that, I thought the whole thing was ridiculous – RAIDER deserved the homeworld, and BALROG was too paranoid about the other pirate. Figuring that the best way to stop the fighting would be to force it into a deadlock, I escalated my RM shipments to RAIDER until his forces were even with BALROG's. (Of course, I didn't tell BALROG this. Meanwhile, RAIDER was gifting me all of his worlds except his homeworld to pay for the RMs.)

It didn't work. BALROG was too stubborn to back down, and RAIDER was too devoted to teaching his enemy a lesson. BALROG diverted fleets from his other conquests in order to block the invasion. RAIDER built more.

In desperation, BALROG gave me an ultimatum – attack RAIDER myself, or he would attack *me*. That was a real threat, since there was no way I could protect my entire border.

I seized RAIDER's last world, his homeworld.

Just at that moment, I noticed something. BALROG had revoked my "ally" status – he was ambushing my fleets at a world I had given him! Then came the news from PEGLEG, another pirate: Out of the blue, he came to me with the tale that BALROG had contacted him about a joint attack against my empire!

Therefore, having already betrayed one ally, I betrayed the other. I gave BALROG's map to PEGLEG, and PEGLEG attacked. Fortunately, RAIDER wasn't sore about losing his homeworld – he had planned on giving it to me anyway – so we patched things up and he continued his attack on BALROG.

And I, although bereft of allies, was within turns of winning the game!

Until PEGLEG turned on me, taking the fleets and worlds I had given him and using them against me. It turned out that he had hornswoggled me . . . BALROG had never talked invasion with him, and I sold my ally out for nothing.

I still might have won, but ARKITE the Berserker dropped a whole squadron of PBB's at once and broke the victory level by almost two thousand excess points. Which left me, although in second place, with a rather miserable rating for that game.

(But what really hurt was knowing that ARKITE, in real life a designer for Milton Bradley Electronics, actually read *this magazine*. He told me so. He mentioned how helpful he'd found my article on ***Starweb*** strategy . . .)

Summing up, I'd have to say this:

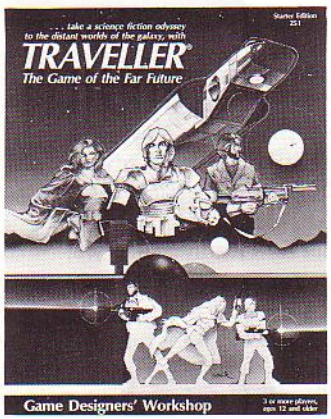
Winning is a function of the six strategy tips mentioned back in my last article.

Having Fun, on the other hand, is a function of *style* – a contest of wits, of wheeling and dealing, of friendships made and alliances cemented.

There's only one thing that bothers me. If what J. Eric Holmes said in *Psychology Today* about ***Dungeons and Dragons*** is also true about ***Starweb*** – namely, that it's "sort of a giant Rorschach test " – well . . . I wonder what my passion for wheeling and dealing says about me?

SG

The *First* and the *Best!*



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More CONTEST RESULTS

In *SG* 61, we announced a "Write a table for generating something useless" contest. We got quite a few responses and printed the best of them in *Fantasy Gamer* 1. Some of the leftovers are good, too, so we decided to let 'em loose. These secondary winners will each get two issues added to their subscriptions. Enjoy!

Jim Simons of Littleton, Colorado, couldn't stand the thought of not knowing the ingredients of Arcturan Lasagna, a dish that almost never turns out the same way twice. Roll 1D12 twice (or three times if you're brave), determine color and shape of noodles, then set the table. Mmm, mmm, good!

(Jim's brother Ed came up with the idea for a useless tables contest in the first place – does this mean that weirdness is genetically or environmentally determined?)

Arcturan Lasagna Ingredient Table

1) Bubbling sauce
2) Contains small, green squishy things
3) Squirming noodles
4) Bouncing noodles
5) Airborne noodles
6) Glowing sauce
7) 1-4 noodles teleport about each turn
8) Noodles slide along all surfaces regardless of gravity
9) The material coheres in an amorphous blob
10) Contains long red stringy things
11) Striped noodles – roll two colors
12) Dotted noodles – roll two colors

Subtable A: Shape of Noodles

1) Rectangular
2) Oval
3) Circle
4) Triangle
5) Square
6) Pentagonal
7) Hexagon
8) Sphere
9) Cylindrical
10) Corkscrew
11) Spiral
12) Long, wiry

Subtable B: Color of Noodles

1) Red
2) Orange
3) Yellow
4) Green
5) Blue
6) Purple
7) Black
8) White
9) Brown
10) Gray

Darrell Byford of Allen, Texas, contributed the following miscellany:

Sack Lunch Generation Table

1) Sandwich only
2) Vegetable only
3) Fruit only
4) Green eggs and ham
5) Sandwich, apple and cupcake
6) Two all-beef patties, special sauce, lettuce, cheese, pickles, onions on a sesame-seed bun

Babblings of a Maniacal NPC As He Runs Past Adventurers Generation Table

1) "You're gonna die! You're gonna die!"
2) "You're all doomed! Doomed I say!"
3) "I said I wanted to watch the damn World Series."
4) "Number nine. Number nine. Number nine."
5) "I am the Eggman, they are the Eggmen, I am the Walrus . . . goo goo ga joob."
6) "You talking to me? Nobody else here, you must be talking to me . . ."

Dead Character Soul Destination

1) Heaven
2) Hell
3) Purgatory
4) Philadelphia

Quest of the Great Jewels

The third War of the Great Jewels is over, having ended with the intervention of the Powers-That-Be, but not before most of Zorplia was laid waste and the greater part of its inhabitants destroyed. The Powers-That-Be have sealed the Great Jewels (talismans of immense power) and many of the lesser talismans in the Forbidden Cities and set enchanted armies to guard them. Only scattered remnants of the four peoples remain. Dragons and other terrors roam the land. Can you marshall your forces and come forth to be the sole ruler of Zorplia?

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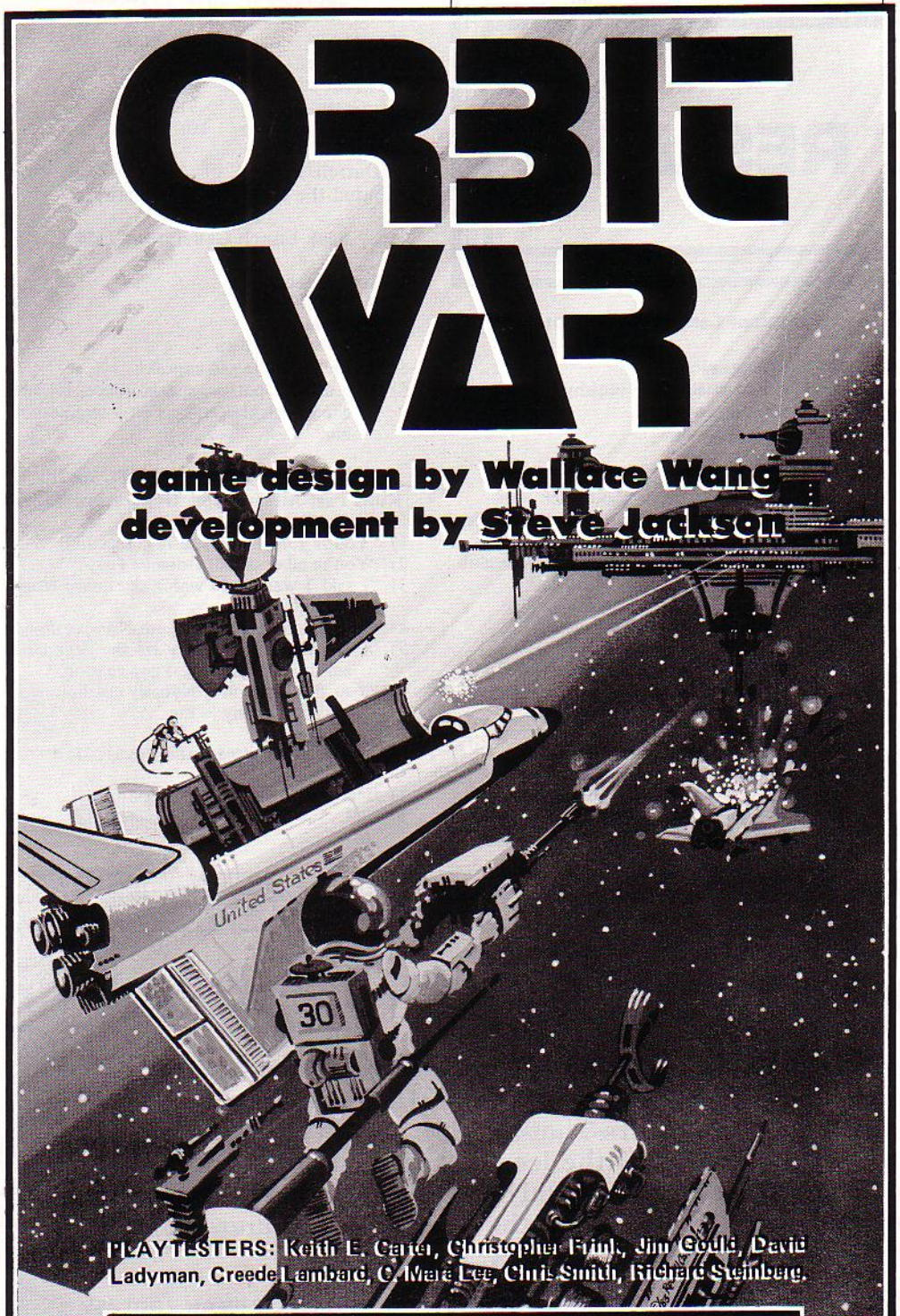
ORBIT WAR



game design by Wallace Wang
development by Steve Jackson

PLAYTESTERS: Keith E. Carter, Christopher Frink, Jim Gould, David Ladyman, Creede Lambard, C. Mara Lee, Chris Smith, Richard Steinberg.

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3.0 Counters
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5.0 Movement
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20.0 Earth
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22.0 Preparation for Play
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1.0 INTRODUCTION

Orbit War is a simulation of satellite warfare in outer space. Players control the forces of the United States and the Soviet Union. Each player attempts to destroy the enemy player's satellites in order to control space.

2.0 MAP

The map represents a region of two-dimensional space surrounding the Earth. A regular series of lines, called Orbit Lines, are overlaid across the hexes.

2.1 *Orbit Lines.* Orbit Lines regulate Orbital Movement. Each Orbit Line has a number from 1/3 to 4. The number of an Orbit Line determines how many hexes a satellite *must* move during Orbital Movement. In the case of fractions, the first number determines the number of hexes a satellite will move and the second number indicates how many turns must elapse before Orbital Movement takes place for that particular Orbit Line. Example: 1/2 means the satellite moves every other turn.

2.2 *Combat Results Table.* The Combat Results Table (CRT) is printed on the map for the convenience of the players. To determine the combat differential for any given combat, subtract the defense strength from the attack strength. Example: A strength of 5 attacking a defense of 2 is a differential of 3.

2.3 *Game-Turn Track.* The Game-Turn Track is printed on the map. The Game-Turn Track is used to keep track of game turns and to remind players when specific actions take place, such as Earth rotation and Orbital Movement for the outer Orbit Lines.

2.4 *Force Boxes.* These boxes hold reinforcements, rockets launched from Earth, and rockets striking Earth for each player.

3.0 COUNTERS

The counters in ***Orbit War*** are divided into two categories: satellites and payloads. All satellite counters have five printed values: Unit Type, Identification Number, Attack Strength, Defense Strength, and Movement Allowance. Counters representing payloads do not have all five values; some (i.e., Nukes) have no printed values at all.

3.1 *Satellite types include:*

3.11 *Early Warning Reconnaissance satellite* (EWR). This counter represents a typical "spy" satellite equipped with cameras and infrared sensors.

3.12 *Communications Jamming satellite* (CJS). This counter represents a satellite equipped with a variety of electronic countermeasure equipment.

3.13 *Orbital Weapons Platform satellite* (OWP). This counter represents

a satellite armed with long-range missiles, mines, and a short-range laser.

3.14 *Hunter-Killer satellite* (HK). This counter represents a heavily armed and armored satellite equipped with high intensity lasers, designed to destroy other satellites.

3.15 *Special Forces Infantry* (SF). This counter represents a squad of elite commandos specially trained to fight in space.

3.16 *Shuttle* (S). This counter represents a re-usable space vehicle able to launch and return to Earth.

3.17 *Earth-Launched Rocket* (ELR). This counter represents a typical large payload-carrying rocket.

3.18 *Orbit-Launched Rocket* (OLR). This counter represents a small rocket launched from orbit.

3.2 *Payload counters include:*

3.21 *Mine*. This counter represents an explosive charge with small thruster rockets and a simple computer "brain."

3.22 *Supply*. This counter represents a packaged load of mines and missiles to resupply OWP satellites and Space Shuttles.

3.23 *Nuke*. This counter represents a single nuclear warhead.

3.24 *3-MIRV*. This counter represents three nuclear warheads.

3.25 *7-MIRV*. This counter represents seven nuclear warheads.

3.26 *Blank*. Blank counters can be used as decoys or as replacements for lost pieces.

4.0 GAME-TURN SEQUENCE

Players alternate who moves first every other turn (i.e., on all odd numbered turns player A moves first, then player B; on all even numbered turns player B moves first, then player A).

The game sequence proceeds as follows:

I. Check for Earth rotation. The Earth rotates at the beginning of every fourth turn (see Section 4.4).

II. The first player for this Game-Turn may launch rockets and shuttles from the Earth. He may also launch rockets from orbiting Shuttles and OWPs. The second player for this Game-Turn repeats the above procedure.

III. Move all counters by Orbital Movement.

IV. The first player for this Game-Turn may take Optional Movement, moving satellites in any direction up to their maximum movement allowances. Shuttles and OWPs may lay mines.

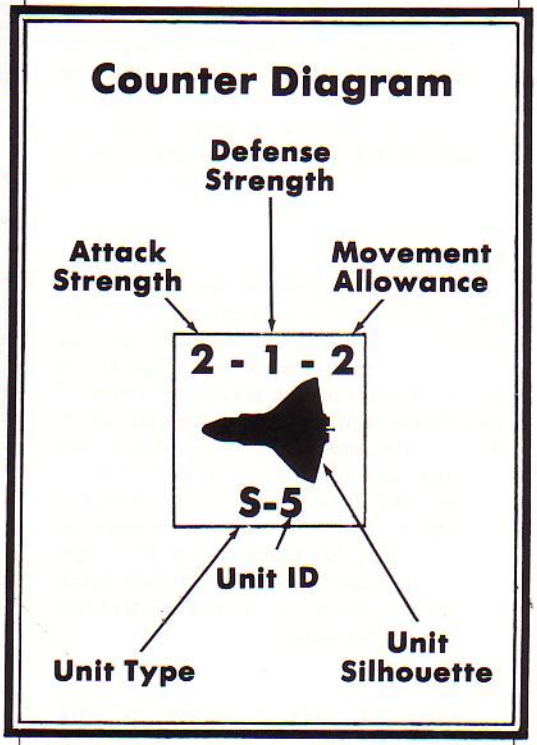
V. The second player may now take Optional Movement and lay mines with his Shuttles and OWPs.

VI. Resolve all mine combat. Announce all missile attacks. Check for possible missile jamming due to enemy CJSs. Resolve all missile combat (see Section 7.2).

VII. Resolve all combat between opposing forces occupying the same hex. Combat is simultaneous.

VIII. Award victory points (VP) for reconnaissance and for destroyed satellites. Deep space reinforcements enter during this step in Turn 4 or later. OWP satellites and Space Shuttles are resupplied at this time.

IX. Move the Game-Turn marker one box.



4.1 *Game-Turn Track*. The Game-Turn marker is placed in the first box of the Game-Turn Track. Each box has a number in the upper right-hand corner, representing the game turn being played. When the marker reaches the end of the track, return the marker to the first box. Each turn represents approximately one hour.

4.2 *First Player of Each Game-Turn*. Each box on the Game-Turn Track has two letters, A and B, representing players A and B respectively. On all odd numbered turns player A is the first player and on all even numbered turns player B is the first player.

4.3 *Orbit Line Reminders*. The numbers 1/2 and 1/3 appear in the lower left corner of certain boxes on the Game-Turn Track. This is to remind players that units on the 1/2 and 1/3 Orbit Lines take Orbital Movement, moving one hex, during those turns only. Units on the 1/2 lines take Orbital Movement every other turn; units on the 1/3 line take Orbital Movement every third turn. Note that on Turns 6 and 12, units on both the 1/2 and the 1/3 lines move.

4.4 *Earth Rotation*. In certain boxes on the Game-Turn Track an R appears in the lower right-hand corner. This is a reminder that the Earth counter should be rotated, at the beginning of that particular turn, one hexside counter-clockwise.

5.0 MOVEMENT

A satellite can move in two ways: Orbital Movement and Optional Movement. A payload without a rocket can only move by Orbital Movement.

5.1 *Orbital Movement*. Orbital Movement is inherent movement due to a counter's position on an Orbit Line. All units *must* move counter-clockwise the number of hexes corresponding to the Orbit Line number printed on the map. (In the case of fractional Orbit Line numbers, Orbital Movement occurs every second or third turn.)

5.2 *Optional Movement*. Each satellite has its Movement Allowance printed in the upper right-hand corner of the counter. The Movement Allowance represents the maximum number of hexes a satellite may move in one turn after Orbital Movement. Movement Allowance may not be exceeded, saved from one turn to another, or transferred between satellites.

5.21 *Gravitational Acceleration*. All satellites may move one hex towards the Earth at no extra cost. This bonus movement is known as gravitational acceleration. Satellites may gravitationally accelerate at any time during optional movement only. (A satellite may gravitationally accelerate before movement, after movement, or not at all.) Gravitational acceleration is optional. Non-satellites may not take gravitational acceleration.

5.3 *Movement Restrictions*. No satellite may move onto the Earth counter. Any satellite which does is considered to have burned up in the atmosphere and is removed from play, awarding the opposing player victory points for the satellite's destruction. *Exceptions*: Special Forces Infantry, Space Shuttles, suicide satellites, and rockets with nuclear warheads may move onto the Earth counter.

5.31 *Zones of Control*. There are no "zones of control" in ***Orbit War***. Satellites are free to move in or out of, but not through, enemy-occupied hexes.

6.0 STACKING

Any number of units of any type may be stacked together in the same hex.

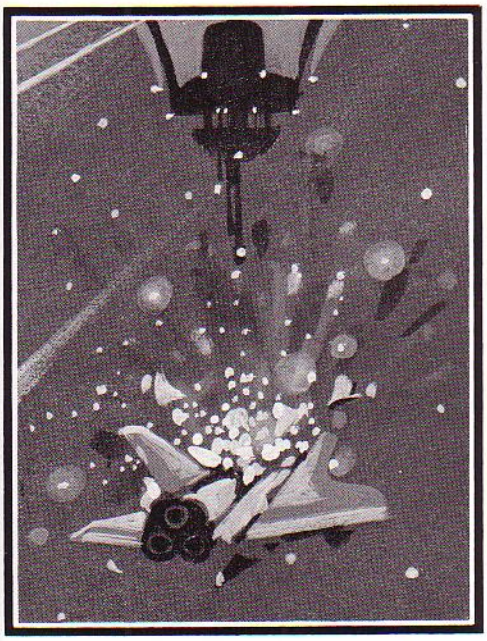
7.0 COMBAT

There are three forms of combat: Mine Combat, Missile Combat, and Normal Combat.

7.1 *Mine Combat.* Mine Combat is *always* resolved before Missile Combat. Each mine counter has an attack strength of 6. Mines may attack all, some, or none of the enemy counters in their hex, but may not attack units outside their hex. When multiple targets are attacked, each attack is rolled separately.

7.11 *Mine Attack Strength.* The attacking strength of the mine (6) is divided by the number of defending satellites in the same hex, rounding fractions *up*. This number is the attack strength of the mine against *each* satellite. The minimum attack strength of each mine counter is 2. Mines are removed from play immediately after an attack.

7.2 *Missile Combat.* Missile Combat is *always* resolved after all Mine Combat but before Normal Combat. There are no missile counters in the game. Each missile may attack any *one* unit (attacking player's choice) up to two hexes away from the launching OWP, Shuttle, or country. Missiles have an attack strength of 5. Each missile attacks *separately*; missile attacks may not be combined.



7.3 *Normal Combat.* Normal Combat occurs when opposing units occupy the same hex. Units do not have to attack. The values for the attack strength and the defense strength, printed on the counters, are used to calculate the odds differential for combat resolution.

7.4 *Combat Resolution.* Combat is resolved by comparing the attack strength of the attacking unit(s) with the defense strength of the defending unit. The defense strength is subtracted from the attack strength to determine a combat differential, as shown on the Combat Results Table (CRT). No satellite may attack more than once per turn. *Exceptions*: Missile and mine combat are considered separate from Normal Combat. Suicide satellites may self-destruct for a second attack (see Section 18.1).

7.5 *Multiple Attacks.* Any number of satellites may combine into one attack, but only one satellite may be the target of each attack (in other words, defense strengths may not be combined). A player may make several attacks in series, against the same or different targets, observing the result of each before making the next. (Missile attacks are an exception to this. The target of each missile attack in a hex must be announced before any attack is rolled.)

7.6 *Combat Results.* Roll two dice for each attack. The target is destroyed if the attacker rolls the number indicated on the CRT, or higher.

8.0 MISSILES

There are no missile counters in the game. Missiles detonate the turn they are launched. Missiles may only be launched from OWP satellites, Space Shuttles, or Earth. Missiles have a maximum range of two hexes and an attack strength of 5.

8.1 *Missiles and Mines.* If a missile's path must take it through an enemy mine hex, the enemy player may attack it with a mine. Both mine and missile are lost. This also holds true if the target hex is mined; the mine(s) may intercept the incoming missile(s), one mine counter per missile.

9.0 MINES

Mines may only be carried by OWP satellites, Shuttles, or rockets. Mines may begin the game "laid" in orbit.

9.1 *Mine Laying.* Space Shuttles and OWP satellites may lay mines any time before, during, or after Optional Movement. Mines are placed in the unit's own hex or any adjacent hex. (It is perfectly legal to lay a mine in an enemy-occupied hex.) Mines may also be carried by rockets launched from OWP satellites, Space Shuttles, or Earth. All mines laid by rockets are placed in the hex where the rocket discharges them (see Section 10.4). Mines may not attack on the turn they are laid.

9.2 *Mine Attacks.* A mine may attack any enemy unit in the hex with it at the end of both players' Optional Movement. A mine may also attack *during* the enemy player's Optional Movement if an enemy satellite moves *through* a hex containing it. This may occur either because the enemy wishes to detonate the mine, or because the enemy has no choice but to pass through that hex. If more than one enemy unit pass through the same mined hex, the mine's attack strength *may* be divided between them (see Section 7.1).

All mine attacks are at the option of the owning player. A mine may attack any, all, or none of the enemy counters in its hex.

9.3 *Attacks Against Mines.* Mines may be attacked by missiles during the Missile Combat phase. This may occur if the missiles entered a mined hex but the mine was newly laid (or the mine-owning player chose not to detonate it). Each mine counter must be attacked separately.

Mines may also be attacked by enemy satellites during the Normal Combat phase – but, again, this will not happen unless the mine-owning player chose not to detonate it, or it was just laid and therefore was not able to detonate.

10.0 EARTH-LAUNCHED ROCKETS

ELRs may only be launched from Earth. An ELR may carry one mine, one type of nuclear warhead (a Nuke, a 3-MIRV, or a 7-MIRV), one satellite, or one Supply counter as a payload. Rockets may *not* carry other rockets or Space Shuttles.

10.1 *Launch.* To launch a rocket, place it face-up in the launching player's "Launch" box. This box is used to prevent a pile of counters from appearing on Earth each turn. The rocket must move away from Earth (up to three hexes) during Optional Movement.

10.2 *Payload.* Any unit (a satellite or payload) carried by a rocket is placed upside down beneath the rocket counter and is moved with the rocket until it is discharged.

10.3 *Combat Status.* Any unit being carried by a rocket is considered to be inside the rocket. If attacked, only the rocket's defense strength is used. If the rocket is destroyed, its payload is also considered destroyed.

10.4 *Discharging Contents.* The owning player of a rocket may, at any time before, during, or after Optional Movement, announce that it is discharging its contents. The rocket counter is *removed* and its payload (the counter beneath it) is flipped right-side up. Satellites may *not* move or attack the turn they are discharged from a rocket or shuttle. *Exception*: Special Forces (SF) may move and attack the turn they are discharged.

10.5 *Launch Limitation.* Each player may launch a maximum of three ELRs from Earth each turn.

10.6 *Dummy Payloads.* If a rocket is launched with a blank (decoy) counter, that rocket is carrying a dummy payload to distract the enemy and make him waste missiles. A dummy payload may never be "dropped." When a rocket with a dummy payload is destroyed, the fact that it was a dummy is revealed.

11.0 ORBIT-LAUNCHED ROCKETS

OLRs may be launched only from space – either from Orbital Weapons Platforms or from a Space Shuttle. An OLR consists of little more than a maneuvering engine and some tracking hardware; therefore, any OWP is assumed to have an infinite number of OLRs available, at no cost. OLRs may *not* be used to place any unit in orbit from Earth – they are far too weak!

11.1 *Launch.* To launch a rocket, place it face-up on top of the Shuttle or OWP that is launching it. It will move with the launching satellite during Orbital Movement, and may move away during Optional Movement.

11.2 *Payloads.* An OLR may carry (a) a warhead (any kind); (b) a mine counter; or (c) a dummy payload as per 10.6 above. It may not carry a satellite.

11.3 *Combat Status.* The cargo of an OLR is carried inside the OLR, and only the OLR's defense strength is used (as for Earth-Launched Rockets). If the rocket is destroyed, its payload is lost.

11.4 *Discharging Payloads.* A payload may be discharged at any time before, during, or after the OLR's Optional Movement. Mines may not attack on the turn they are discharged.

11.5 *Launch Limitation.* Each player may launch a maximum of three OLRs from each Orbital Weapons Platform per turn. No OWP may launch more than one warhead-carrying OLR per turn. OLRs may not begin the game in orbit as satellites.

12.0 SUPPLIES

The contents of a Supply counter consist of any combination of mines, missiles, or nuclear warheads not exceeding *ten*. A MIRV counts as a single unit. The contents of a supply counter are taken from the arsenal of mines, missiles, and nuclear warheads designated in 22.3, step 4 as starting the game on Earth. Supplies may only be used to replenish a Space Shuttle or an OWP's arsenal. Supplies may *never* attack enemy units on their own. Supply counters may only be carried by rockets or Space Shuttles. Players must keep track, on a separate piece of paper, of exactly what is being carried by a Supply counter.

12.1 *Resupplying.* To resupply a Space Shuttle or an OWP satellite, the rocket or Space Shuttle carrying the Supply counter is placed in the same hex as the satellite to be resupplied.

If the resupplying rocket or Space Shuttle is destroyed, the supplies are considered destroyed. A satellite being resupplied may *not* attack (engage in either Missile or Normal Combat) the turn it is being resupplied. A Space Shuttle may *not* attack (engage in either Missile or Normal Combat) the turn it is resupplying an OWP satellite or another Space Shuttle. Resupplying satellites and satellites being resupplied *defend* against all attacks normally. A resupplying rocket counter is removed from play at the end of the turn it resupplies a satellite.

13.0 SPECIAL FORCES INFANTRY (SF)

13.1 *Endurance.* Special Forces counters may remain in space for a maximum of twelve Game-Turns, after which they must return to Earth by moving the Special Forces counter onto the owning player's country on the Earth counter. Any Special Forces counters which fail to return in time are removed from play and the opposing player gains victory points for the Special Forces' destruction. After spending three turns on Earth, the Special Forces counter may return to play via a rocket or a Space Shuttle.

13.2 *Discharging from Rockets and Space Shuttles.* Special Forces may move and attack the turn they are discharged from either a rocket or Space Shuttle.

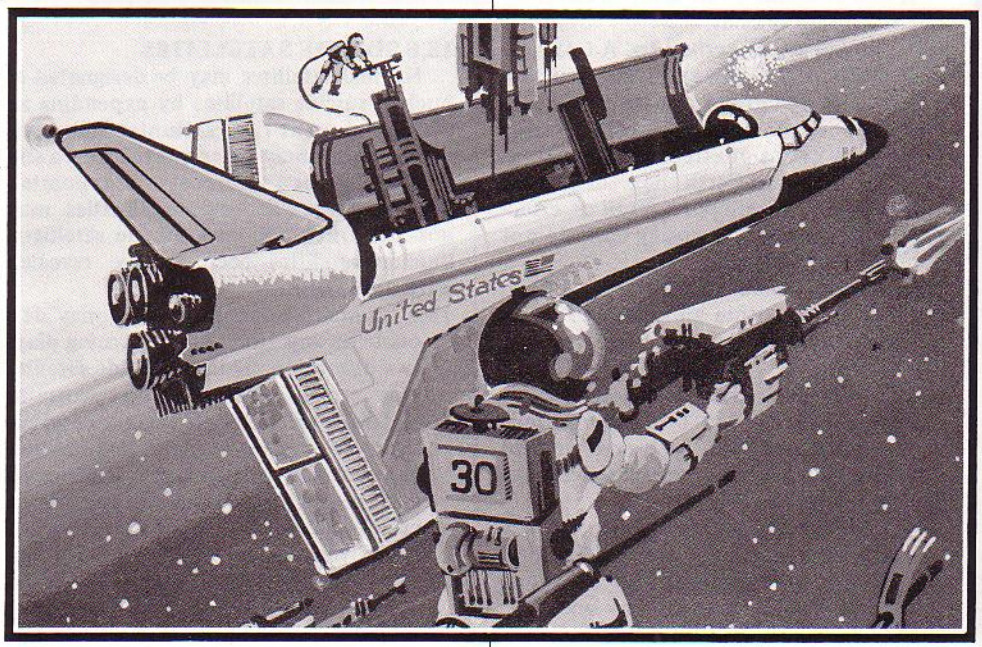
14.0 SHUTTLES (S)

The USA player has five Space Shuttles available. The USSR player has two Space Shuttles available. Shuttles launch in the same way rockets do (see Section 10.1).

14.1 *Movement.* A Space Shuttle can launch from Earth without a rocket. Thus, in one turn a Space Shuttle can launch from Earth and attack in the same turn. (Remember: Satellites discharged from rockets may *not* attack the turn they are discharged.)

14.2 *Cargo Hold.* A Space Shuttle may hold any combination of missiles and mines not exceeding six. Alternatively, it may carry one OLR *and* one nuclear warhead (a Nuke, a 3-MIRV, or a 7-MIRV), one Supply counter, or one satellite of any type, in *addition* to a combination of missiles and mines not exceeding two. *Exceptions*: A Space Shuttle may *not* carry an ELR or another Space Shuttle.

14.3 *Discharging Cargo.* A Space Shuttle may discharge its cargo (a rocket with a nuclear warhead, a Supply counter, or a satellite) in its own hex at any time before, during, or after Optional Movement. Satellites may *not* move or attack the turn they are discharged. *Exception*: Special Forces may move and attack the turn they are discharged.



14.4 *Returning to Earth.* A Space Shuttle which returns to Earth is removed from play. A Space Shuttle may return to Earth by moving the Shuttle counter onto the owning player's country on the Earth counter. The opposing player does *not* gain victory points for the Shuttle's return to Earth. A Shuttle which returns to Earth may *not* return to play and is effectively out of the game.

14.5 *Transferring Weapons.* Space Shuttles may freely give mines, missiles, or nuclear warheads to other Space Shuttles or OWPs occupying the same hex. Treat a weapons transfer according to the rules for resupplying (see Section 12.1).

15.0 EARLY WARNING RECONNAISSANCE SATELLITES (EWR)

An EWR satellite may detect enemy rocket launchings if it is in the enemy country's spotting cone. Therefore, an EWR satellite gains 1 victory point (1 VP) each turn it is in the enemy country's spotting cone.

15.1 *Spotting Cone.* Printed on the Earth counter are the two countries: USA and USSR. The shaded regions represent the spotting cone which must be extended outward to the edge of the map to fully define the complete spotting cone.

15.2 *Reconnaissance.* Each turn an EWR satellite is in the enemy country's spotting cone, the owning player is awarded 1 victory point (1 VP). Each EWR satellite in the enemy country's spotting cone gains 1 VP, so if there are five EWR satellites in the spotting cone, 5 VPs are awarded at the end of the turn.

16.0 COMMUNICATIONS JAMMING SATELLITES (CJS)

A CJS contains a vast array of electronic jamming equipment.

16.1 *Radius of Effectiveness.* A CJS's radius of effectiveness extends two hexes. Overlapping radii of effectiveness from friendly CJSs *each* take effect separately! A radius of effectiveness may extend *into* the Earth hex, but never *through* it. Overlapping radii of effectiveness between opposing CJSs do not affect one another.

16.2 *Missile Jamming.* Missiles fired from or at a unit within an enemy CJS's radius of effectiveness may be jammed. Roll one die. A missile which passes through the radius of effectiveness is jammed on a roll of 1-3. Jammed missiles are considered destroyed and do not attack. Friendly missiles are never jammed by friendly CJSs.

16.3 *Increased Defense.* The defense strength of any unit within a friendly CJS' sphere of effectiveness, including the CJS itself, is increased by one.

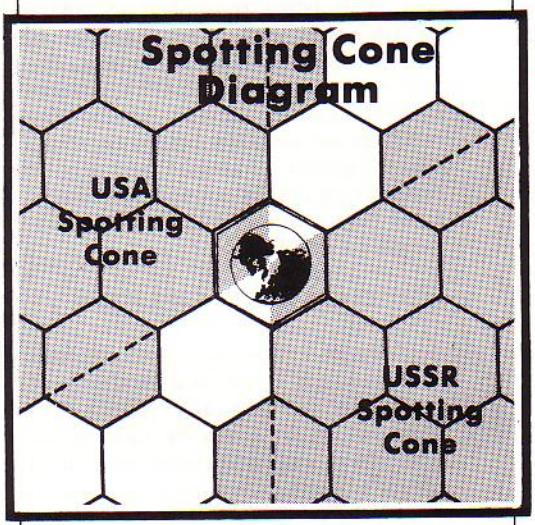
16.4 *Jamming.* An enemy EWR satellite is automatically jammed if it ends the turn in a CJS's radius of effectiveness. Jammed EWRs do not gain VPs.

16.5 *Destruction.* If a CJS is destroyed, its effects continue until the end of that turn's combat.

17.0 ORBITAL WEAPONS PLATFORM SATELLITES (OWP)

OWP satellites may be launched with, and carry, any combination of mines, missiles, and nuclear warheads not exceeding ten (10). OWP satellites contain an unlimited number of orbital launch rockets for the purpose of the game. OWP satellites may *not* hold other satellites.

17.1 *Combat.* OWP satellites may launch any number or combination of mines and missiles in one turn (see Turn Sequence). An OWP may not lay mines or fire missiles on a turn it launches rockets (whatever their contents). Only one nuclear warhead may be launched per turn. An OWP may use rockets to lay mines. OWPs *must* use rockets to launch nuclear warheads.



18.0 SUICIDE SATELLITES

Normal satellites may be designated as nuclear suicide satellites by expending an additional point (i.e., a Hunter-Killer satellite in orbit may be converted into a suicide satellite at a total cost of four points). Special Forces and Space Shuttles may *not* be converted into suicide satellites. Suicide satellites need not be revealed until detonation.

18.1 *Combat.* Suicide satellites may detonate at any time, at the owning player's discretion. Thus, a suicide satellite may attack with its regular weapons and then self-destruct for a second attack, or it may elect to self-destruct *before* being attacked. Any suicide attack, regardless of satellite type, has an attack strength of 5 against *all* units, friendly or enemy, in the hex. A suicide satellite which detonates is removed from play and the opposing player is awarded victory points for its destruction.

18.2 *Rocket-Borne Nuke.* A warhead (any kind) carried by a rocket (either kind) may attack as a suicide satellite. However, no warhead may begin the game in space, except aboard a Shuttle, an OWP, or a suicide satellite.

18.3 *Earth Attack.* A suicide satellite has the option, during the owning player's Optional Movement step, to move onto the enemy country. Place it in the enemy "rocket strike" box and proceed as in 19.3, below. The opposing player gains victory points for the satellite's destruction.

19.0 NUCLEAR WARHEADS

Nuclear warheads come in three varieties: Nuke, 3-MIRV, and 7-MIRV. A Nuke represents a single nuclear warhead, a 3-MIRV represents a cluster of three nuclear warheads, and a 7-MIRV represents a cluster of seven nuclear warheads.

19.1 *Launch.* Nuclear warheads may only be used when built into a suicide satellite (see above) or when carried by an ELR or OLR. Nuke counters never appear separately.

19.2 *Combat.* If a rocket carrying a warhead is attacked, its defense strength is 1. A rocket or missile carrying a warhead may attack as a suicide satellite (see Section 18, above).

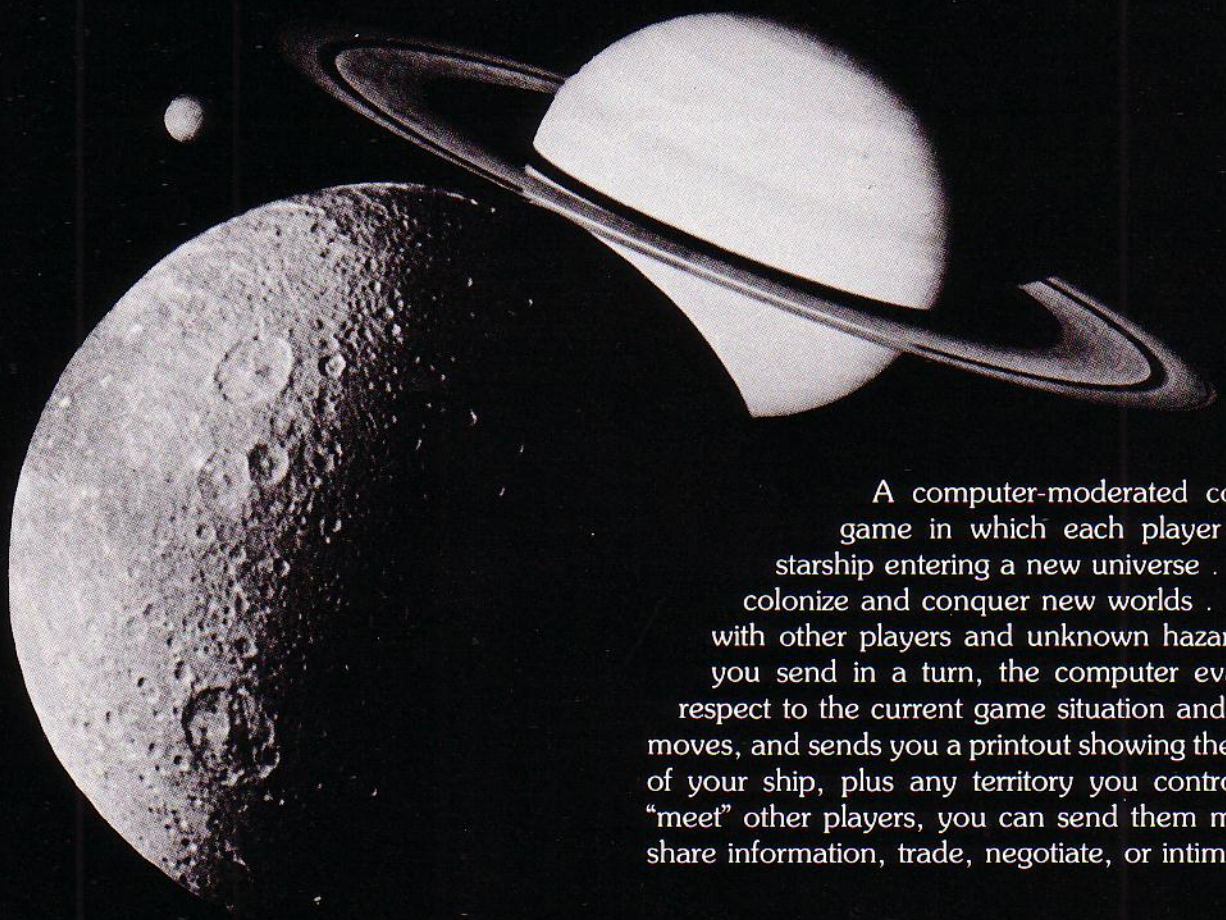
19.3 *Striking Earth.* When a rocket counter with a warhead is moved through the enemy spotting cone onto the Earth hex, this constitutes a nuclear attack. The rocket, with payload underneath, is placed in the enemy country's "rocket strike" box. The enemy player will have a chance to intercept Earth-fired rockets during the missile phase. If he does not try to intercept, or if the intercepting missile misses, the rocket strikes Earth. Dummy payloads have no effect; nuclear warheads score victory points.

19.4 *Interception.* During the missile launch phase, each player may attempt to intercept the enemy rockets in his "rocket strike" box. (The purpose of this box and the launch boxes, of course, is to avoid a huge pile of counters on Earth.) These attacks are carried out like any other missile attack; the defense strength of a rocket is 1, and the defense strength of a suicide satellite is equal to that of the satellite carrying it. The intercepting player must designate which (numbered) rockets are being attacked, since often most rockets in an attacking wave will have dummy payloads.

19.5 *Set-up Limitation.* Nuclear warheads cannot begin the game in space unless carried by an OWP or Shuttle, or as part of a suicide satellite.

continued on page 25

UNIVERSE III



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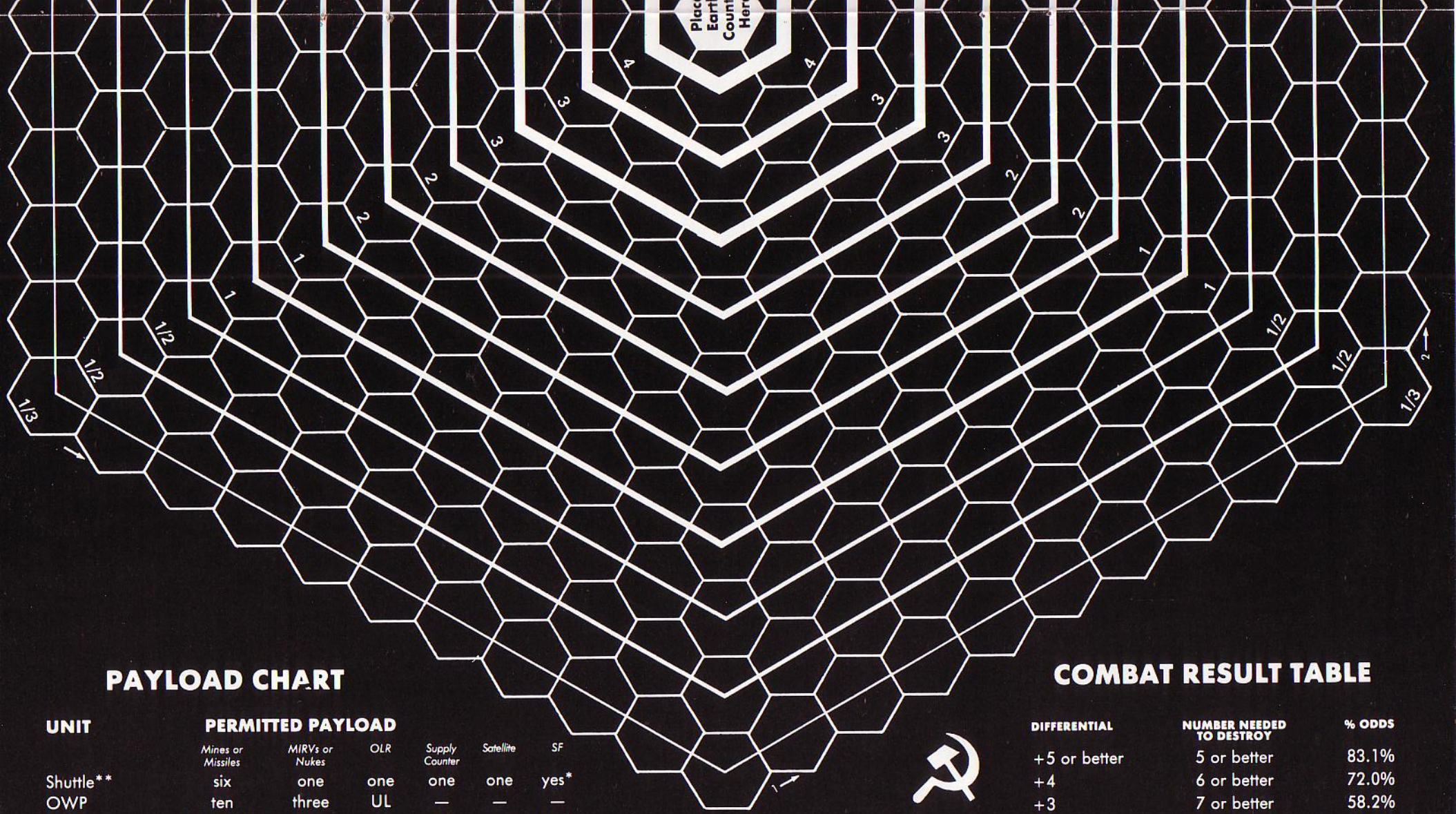

PAYLOAD CHART

UNIT	PERMITTED PAYLOAD					
	Mines or Missiles	*MIRVs or Nukes*	*OLR*	*Supply Counter*	*Satellite*	*SF*
Shuttle**	six	one	one	one	one	yes*
OWP	ten	three	UL	—	—	—
ELR	one mine	one	—	one	one	yes*
OLR	one mine	one	—	—	—	—
Supply Counter	ten***	ten***	UL	—	—	—
Station	UL	UL	UL	UL	—	yes*

* These units may carry Special Forces Infantry — see Section 13.

** May carry any combination of mines and missiles up to six; or may carry one satellite, or one OLR and warhead, or one Supply Counter *plus* any combination of mines and missiles up to two. See Section 14.

*** May carry any combination of mines, missiles, or warheads up to ten. See Section 12.

UL = Unlimited amount.

Rockets Launched From USSR	Rockets Striking USSR	Reinforcements On Ground In USSR	USSR Deep Space Reinforcements

COMBAT RESULT TABLE

DIFFERENTIAL	NUMBER NEEDED TO DESTROY	% ODDS
+5 or better	5 or better	83.1%
+4	6 or better	72.0%
+3	7 or better	58.2%
+2	8 or better	41.5%
+1	9 or better	27.7%
0	10 or better	16.6%
−1, −2	11 or better	8.3%

GAME-TURN TRACK

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12
A,B	B,A ½	A,B ⅓	B,A ½ R	A,B	B,A ½, ⅓	A,B	B,A ½ R	B,A ⅓	A,B ½	B,A	A,B ½, ⅓ R

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0-1-1	0-1-1	0-1-1	0-1-1	0-1-1	0-1-1	0-1-1	0-1-1								
EWR-1	EWR-2	EWR-3	EWR-4	EWR-5	EWR-6	EWR-7	EWR-8	NUKE	NUKE	NUKE	NUKE	NUKE	NUKE	NUKE	NUKE
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HK-1	HK-2	HK-3	HK-4	HK-5	HK-6	HK-7	HK-8	HK-9	HK-10	HK-11	HK-12	HK-13	HK-14	HK-15	SF-1
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OLR-13	OLR-14	OLR-15	OLR-16	OLR-17	OLR-18	OLR-19	OLR-20	OLR-21	OLR-22	OLR-23	OLR-24	7-MIRV	7-MIRV	7-MIRV	SS-2
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MINE	MINE	MINE	MINE	MINE	MINE	MINE	MINE	MINE	MINE	MINE	MINE	3-MIRV	3-MIRV	3-MIRV	CJS-1
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MINE	MINE	MINE	MINE	MINE	MINE	MINE	MINE	MINE	MINE	MINE	MINE	3-MIRV	3-MIRV	3-MIRV	CJS-1
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EWR-1	EWR-2	EWR-3	EWR-4	EWR-5	EWR-6	EWR-7	EWR-8	NUKE	NUKE	NUKE	NUKE	NUKE	NUKE	NUKE	NUKE

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Red counters = USSR

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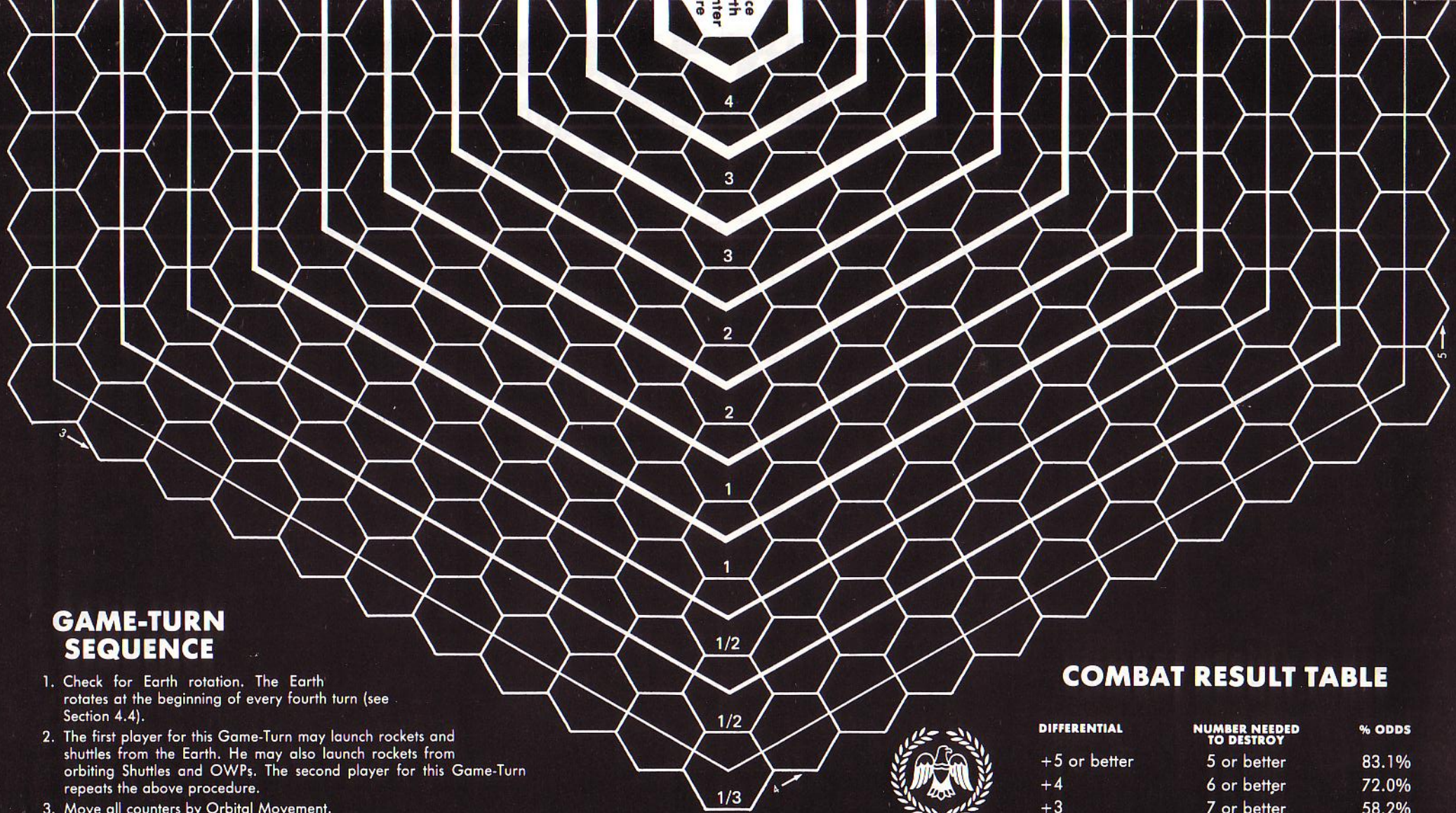

GAME-TURN SEQUENCE

1. Check for Earth rotation. The Earth rotates at the beginning of every fourth turn (see Section 4.4).
2. The first player for this Game-Turn may launch rockets and shuttles from the Earth. He may also launch rockets from orbiting Shuttles and OWPs. The second player for this Game-Turn repeats the above procedure.
3. Move all counters by Orbital Movement.
4. The first player for this Game-Turn may take Optional Movement, moving satellites in any direction up to their maximum movement allowances. Shuttles and OWPs may lay mines.
5. The second player may now take Optional Movement and lay mines with his Shuttles and OWPs.
6. Resolve all mine combat. Announce all missile attacks. Check for possible missile jamming due to enemy CJSs. Resolve all missile combat (see Section 7.2).
7. Resolve all combat between opposing forces occupying the same hex. Combat is simultaneous.
8. Award victory points (VP) for reconnaissance and for destroyed satellites. Deep space reinforcements enter during this step in Turn 4 or later. OWP satellites and Space Shuttles are resupplied at this time.
9. Move the Game-Turn marker one space forward.

Rockets Launched From USA	Rockets Striking USA	Reinforcements On Ground In USA	USA Deep Space Reinforcements

COMBAT RESULT TABLE

DIFFERENTIAL	NUMBER NEEDED TO DESTROY	% ODDS
+5 or better	5 or better	83.1%
+4	6 or better	72.0%
+3	7 or better	58.2%
+2	8 or better	41.5%
+1	9 or better	27.7%
0	10 or better	16.6%
−1, −2	11 or better	8.3%

ORBIT WAR

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20.0 EARTH

Printed on the Earth counter are the spotting cones for each country (see Section 15.1).

20.1 *Combat*. Each country may fire missiles against satellites. These missiles have a range of two hexes and may only be fired at targets within the attacking country's spotting cone. *No* target outside the two-hex range or outside of the attacking country's spotting cone may be attacked by Earth-launched missiles. Missiles on Earth may be sent to resupply OWP satellites and Space Shuttles, as part of a Supply counter.

20.2 *Rotation*. Every fourth turn the Earth counter is rotated one hexside counter-clockwise.

21.0 REINFORCEMENTS

Reinforcements are not initially placed on the map but are held in the reinforcement boxes. Reinforcements may begin on Earth or in deep space. Costs for reinforcements are less than for units that begin in orbit.

21.1 *Earth Reinforcements*. Earth reinforcements can come into play only if they are launched into orbit by an ELR or Space Shuttle.

21.2 *Deep Space Reinforcements*. In addition to designating which satellites are deep space reinforcements, players must also note from which map edge (numbered 1-6) the deep space reinforcements will enter. Deep space reinforcements must first appear on any one of the numbered outer map hex edges on the turn they are activated. They are placed in alternating sequence, with the player who moved first that turn placing the first unit, as for game set-up. Deep space reinforcements may *not* attack the turn they appear on the map. Any turn afterwards they may move and fight normally.

Deep space reinforcements may only enter the game on Turn 4 or any turn thereafter.

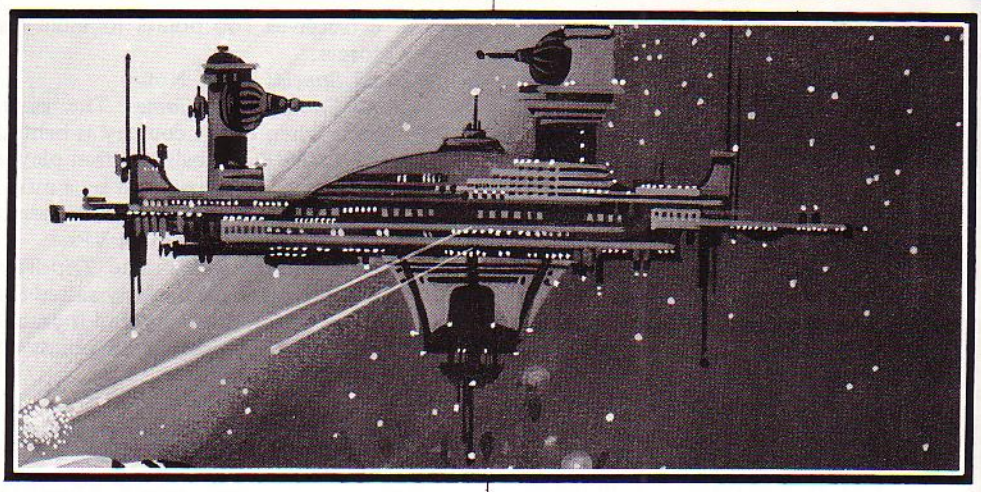
21.3 *Reinforcement Restrictions*. The point cost of mines, missiles, and nuclear warheads is fixed, wherever they start. Special Forces, rockets (with or without payloads) or Space Shuttles may *not* be designated as deep space reinforcements.

22.0 PREPARATION FOR PLAY

22.1 *Scenario Selection*. Players decide which side and which scenario they will play.

22.2 *Selection of Forces*. Each player secretly selects his forces limited by the total number of points available to him according to the scenario selected.

22.3 *Bookkeeping*. Each player must write down, on a separate sheet of paper:



(1) which satellites are Earth reinforcements
(2) which satellites are deep space reinforcements
(3) the number of mines, missiles, and nuclear warheads carried by each OWP satellite and Space Shuttle
(4) the number of mines, missiles, and nuclear warheads in each country
(5) which satellites are suicide satellites

22.4 *Set-up*. Each player rolls one die. The high roller is player A and the other player is player B for the remainder of the game.

Player A places one of his satellites *face down* (blank counters can be used as decoys) on the map and player B does likewise, alternating until all satellites are on the map. Reinforcements remain hidden off the map at this time. Counters *may* be placed on top of enemy counters.

Flip all counters right-side up, remove all blank counters and begin play.

23.0 VICTORY CONDITIONS

Players receive victory points (VPs) for each enemy satellite destroyed by any means, for each turn their EWR satellites are in the enemy country's spotting cone, and for each nuclear warhead which hits the enemy country. Victory points are awarded as follows:

For each EWR each turn in the enemy country's spotting cone: 1 VP
For each OWP or HK destroyed: 1 VP
For each CJS or Special Force destroyed: 2 VP
For each EWR or Space Shuttle destroyed: 3 VP
For each Nuke which strikes the enemy country: 10 VP
For each 3-MIRV which strikes the enemy country: 30 VP
For each 7-MIRV which strikes the enemy country: 70 VP

Each scenario may have additional victory point tabulations.

24.0 SCENARIOS

24.1 *BLOCKADE*. This scenario depicts an attempt by one side to deny the other side access to space.

24.11 *Beginning the Game*. One player is designated as the blockading player and receives 45 points to build his forces. The other player receives 35 points to build his forces. All but 10 of these points must be designated as either Earth reinforcements or as deep space reinforcements; no more than 10 points may be used in deep space.

24.12 *Special Rules*. No nuclear warheads are allowed.

24.13 *Ending the Game*. The game ends after twelve turns or when either player's forces are completely destroyed. The winner is the player with the most victory points.

24.2 *INTERCEPT*. This scenario depicts a Soviet attempt to pick off a Space Shuttle carrying an important military-hardware experiment.

24.21 *Beginning the Game*. The USA player gets 40 points to build his forces, plus one Space Shuttle at no additional cost. The USSR player receives 45 points to build his forces.

24.22 *Special Rules*. Before setting up, the USA player must designate both the area (numbered 1-6 on the map edges) and the turn the Shuttle will enter the game. The special Shuttle may carry up to a half-payload of weapons. The USA player may *not* attack until the turn *after* the USSR player moves any of his satellites by Optional Movement. No nuclear warheads are allowed.

24.23 *Ending the Game*. The game ends when the Shuttle either returns safely to Earth or is destroyed. The USA player receives 10 VPs for returning the Shuttle to Earth. The USSR player receives 10 VPs for destroying it. The winner is the player with the most VPs at the end of the game.

24.24 *Optional Rule*. For a cost of only two points each the USA player may

purchase additional Shuttles in deep space. He must designate which Shuttle is carrying the experimental hardware, in addition to designating the area and the turn each Shuttle will enter the game. Note that this is an exception to Rule 21.3.

24.3 *TRIP-WIRE*. This scenario depicts a "limited" action, with each side waiting for the optimum moment to attempt a pre-emptive strike.

24.31 *Beginning the Game*. Each player receives 50 points to build his forces.

24.32 *Special Rules*. The first player to successfully hit the enemy with a nuclear warhead *loses* 10 points (though he still gets points for the hit). If both players hit on the same turn, each loses the 10 points. In addition, players get VPs for their own surviving forces at the end of the game, equivalent to the VPs the enemy *would* have gotten if he had destroyed them – i.e., a surviving HK is worth one point, and so on.

24.33 *Ending the Game*. The game ends at the end of the 12th turn either player attacks. The winner is the player with the most victory points.

24.4 *TOTAL WAR*. This scenario depicts the beginning of World War III.

24.41 *Beginning the Game*. Each player receives 100 points to build his forces.

24.42 *Special Rules*. None.

24.43 *Ending the Game*. The game ends when either country is behind by 150 VP. In reality, either player loses if his country is hit by a nuke. For gaming purposes, the winner is the player with the most VPs.

24.44 *Optional Rules*. The *Trip-Wire* Special Rule is particularly suited for this scenario. You may find it practical to limit in-orbit build points to 25 to 40 for each side.

SPACE STATIONS An Advanced Rule for *Orbit War*

Description. Space Stations (SS) are large satellites, built a piece at a time from components carried into orbit by rocket or Shuttle. Each side has two Space Station counters. A Space Station has an attack factor of 4, defense of 4, and movement of 1. Its point cost in orbit is 12; it is worth 10 victory points.

Setup. Space Stations are not available as reinforcements; if chosen, they must begin the game in orbit. Since they are very large, they are impossible to hide; Space Station counters must be set up first, face up.

Contents. A Space Station may carry an *unlimited* number of missiles, mines, and/or nukes – up to a player's whole arsenal. A Space Station may be resupplied in the same way as an OWP. It may also make up Supply counters from its arsenal, and send them, via OLR or Shuttle, to resupply other satellites. Supply counters may not be sent from the Space Station to Earth except on a Shuttle.

Combat. During one turn, a Space Station may do any or *all* of the following: (a) fire up to 10 missiles at one or more targets; (b) lay up to 10 mines; (c) launch up to three OLRs containing any payload (or no payload); (d) make a normal attack using its combat strength of 4.

Special Forces. An SF unit may treat a Space Station like Earth for "endurance" purposes (13.1) – that is, after spending 12 Game-Turns in space, it can spend three Game-Turns at the station and then return to action.

Observation. A Space Station in the enemy spotting cone counts as *two* EWR satellites for victory point purposes, unless jammed by an enemy CJS.

More advanced rules for ***Orbit War***, plus an article from the designer, will appear in the next issue of *Space Gamer*.

ORBIT WAR UNITS

Unit Type	*Attack Strength*	*Defense Strength*	*Movement Allowance*	*Point Cost: Orbit*	*Point Cost: Deep Space*	*Point Cost: Earth*	*Number Available***	*VPs*
EWR	0	1	1	2	1½	1	8 (each)	3
CJS	0	1	2	4	2½	2	2 (each)	2
OWP	1	2	1	3	2	1	10 (each)	1
HK	4	3	2	3	2	1	15 (each)	1
SF	3	2	1	2	x	1	2 (each)	2
Shuttle	2	1	2	4	x	2	5 USA 2 USSR	3
ELR	0	1	3	x	x	½	Unlimited	0
OLR	0	1	3	0*	0*	0*	Unlimited	0
Mine	6	1	0	½	½	½	Unlimited	0
Missile	5	–	2	½	½	½	Unlimited	0
Nuke	5	–	–	1	1	1	Unlimited	0
3-MIRV	5	–	–	4	4	4	Unlimited	0
7-MIRV	5	–	–	8	8	8	Unlimited	0
Supply	–	–	–	Varies	Varies	Varies	Unlimited	0
Suicide Satellite	5 (for explosion)	Varies	0	+1	+1	+1	Unlimited	0
Space Station	4	4	1	12	x	x	2 (each)	10

* The number of OLRs available to each side is considered to be unlimited within the scope of the game, and their cost is considered negligible.

** When a number is given, this is the number of counters provided, and no further satellites of that type may be bought. "Unlimited" indicates that players may buy as many units as they like, recording the number bought and re-using counters as necessary.

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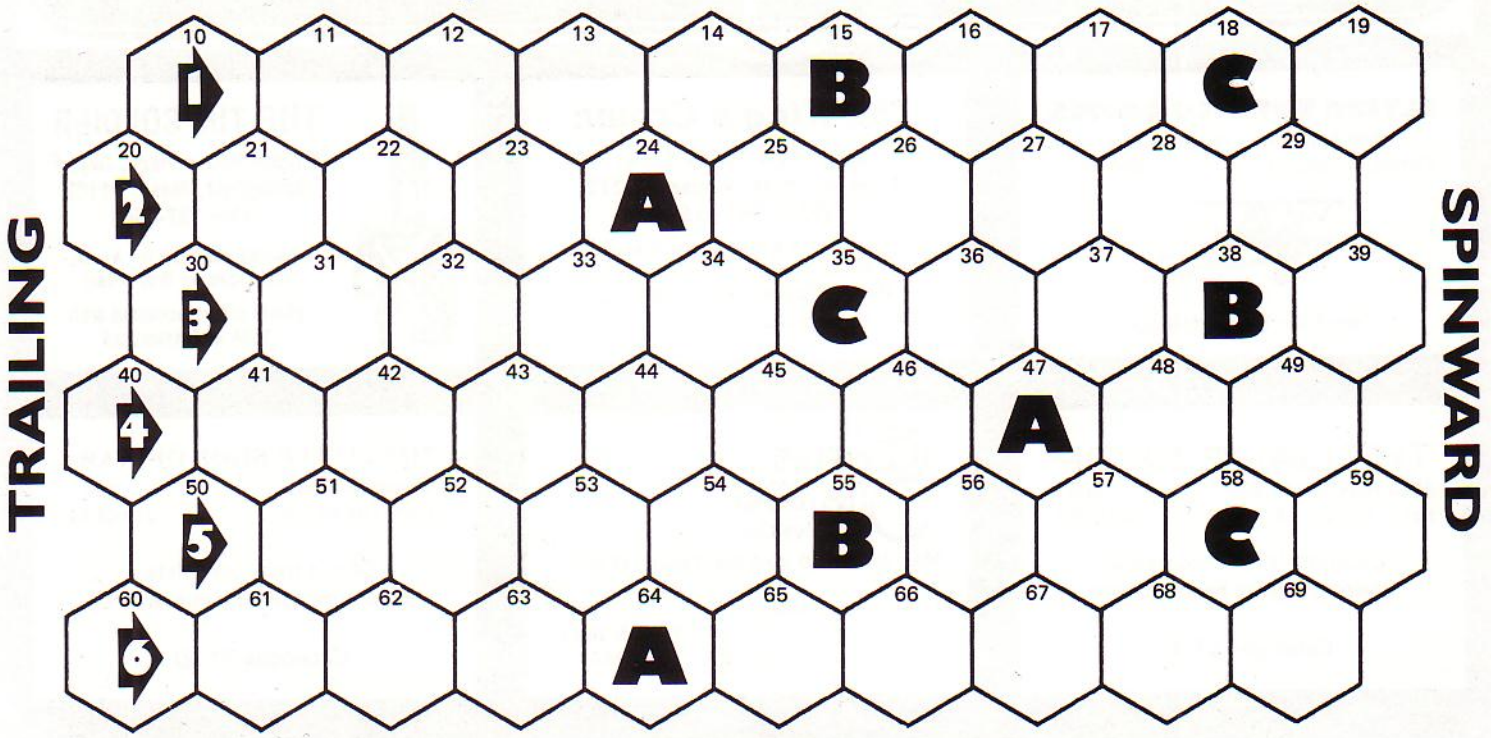
SHUTTLEWARS

Orbital Space Combat in the 1980's



INTRODUCTION: Shuttlewars is a two-player game of tactical, shuttle-to-satellite combat in orbit around the Earth. The Space Shuttle is armed with a 30-ton pulse laser weapon in its payload bay, and the three killer satellites are armed with either a pulse laser weapon or with proximity-detonated explosives. The game may be played solitaire.

THE GAME MAP: Each hex on the game map represents a distance of 1000 km (622 miles), and the entire mapsheet is about 40% of the length of a single orbit. The hexes are numbered with a two-digit identification code. The lettered hexes are used for initial satellite deployment and the arrowed hexes are for Shuttle entry.

THE PLAYING PIECES: The game requires movable units to be placed on the game map; use **Orbit War** counters.

INITIAL SETUP: Satellite placement is determined by a roll of a six-sided die. On a roll of 1 or 2, place one satellite on each **A** deployment hex; on a roll of 3 or 4, use the **B** hexes; and on a roll of 5 or 6, use the **C** hexes. Shuttle entry is determined by a die roll also: Place the Shuttle marker on the arrowed hex corresponding to the die roll.

GAME TURN PROCEDURE: Each game turn, a number of actions take place in a specific sequence, as follows.

a. Move the Shuttle two hexes.
b. Determine Shuttle entry (if needed).
c. Move all mine satellites one hex.
d. Fire the Shuttle laser.
e. Fire the laser satellites.

SHUTTLE MOVEMENT: The map edge that the Shuttle enters is labeled Trailing and the map edge that the Shuttle exits is labeled Spinward. The Shuttle moves two hexes per turn from the Trailing edge toward the Spinward edge. Placing the Shuttle on a numbered arrow hex counts as one hex of movement. The Shuttle need not move in a perfectly straight line, but it must always proceed toward the Spinward edge and it may only leave the map area via that edge. *The Shuttle may not stop and always moves two hexes per game turn.* When the Shuttle leaves the Spinward edge of the game map, use the Shuttle Entry Procedure described above to re-enter it for another pass. *Examples:* A Shuttle in hex 25 may move to 15, 26, or 35 as a legal move. Once in 15, it may only move to 16 or 26. It may only exit the map on a later turn from 19, 29, 39, 49, 59, or 69.

SATELLITE MOVEMENT: When each Satellite is placed, flip a coin to determine its type: If heads, it is a laser satellite; if tails, it is a mine satellite. *Laser satellites do not move.* Mine satellites attempt to intercept the path of the Shuttle. Each turn, after the Shuttle moves, each mine satellite moves one hex in the direction of the Shuttle. A mine satellite will not enter a hex occupied by another satellite (of either type).

MINE SATELLITE DETONATION: When the Shuttle and a mine satellite simultaneously occupy the same hex (as a result of movement by either player), the mine satellite *immediately explodes* and is removed from play. Roll the die. On a roll of 1, the Shuttle is destroyed. On a roll of 2 or 3, the Shuttle laser is destroyed. On a roll of 4, 5, or 6, the mine has no effect. If the Shuttle already has its laser destroyed, a damage roll of 2 or 3 will destroy the Shuttle.

LASER COMBAT: To fire a laser (either from the Shuttle or a laser satellite), count the number of hexes between the laser and its target (count the target's hex, but not the laser's). Roll the die: If the die roll is greater than the range in hexes, the target is hit (effective range is thus limited to five hexes). Fire at a target in the same hex is resolved as if at a range of one hex: *A 1 is always a miss.* Resolving laser hit damage on the Shuttle is the same as resolving mine satellite detonation. When the Shuttle hits, the satellite is always destroyed.

VICTORY: The game continues until either the Shuttle is destroyed or all three satellites are destroyed (note that if the Shuttle laser is out, the game is not over). The Shuttle player receives one point for each satellite destroyed, and the satellite player receives three points for destroying the Shuttle *or* two points for destroying the Shuttle laser (not both). The player with the most points wins, and a tie is a victory for the Shuttle player. There are four levels of victory depending upon the difference between the point totals:

0 Pyrrhic Victory (Shuttle player only)
1 Marginal Victory
2 Decisive Victory
3 Total Victory

VARIATIONS: Free Deployment: The satellite player may choose what types of satellites to use and may deploy on any lettered hex (one satellite per hex). The Shuttle player may enter the map on any Trailing edge hex.

Supershuttle: The Shuttle has two lasers on board and may fire twice per turn, but it only moves one hex per turn.

Total Shuttlewar: Give the Shuttle player two Shuttles and the satellite player six satellites; divide victory points by two (round fractions up). Suitable for team play.

Design: Henry Biancardi; *Development/Graphic Design:* Chuck Kallenbach II; *Playtesters:* Dan Hillan, Don Rapp, and Steve Vice
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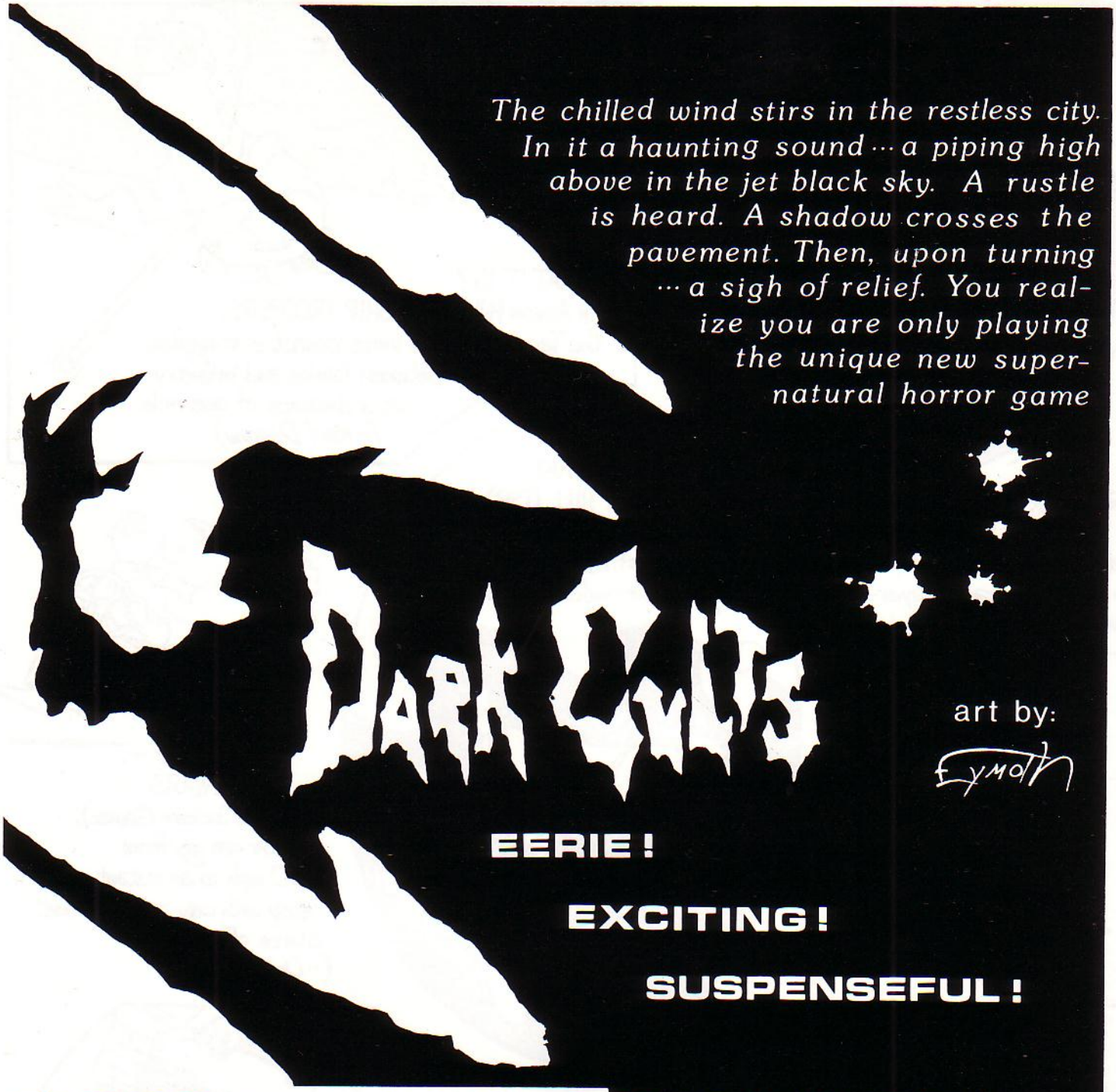
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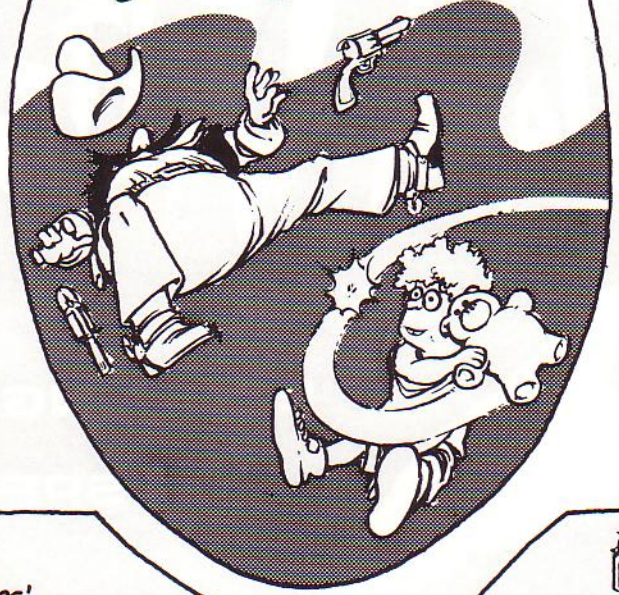
MURPHY'S RULES

WHAT IT IS?
In Avalon Hill's STARSHIP TROOPERS, the Terran player's units cannot distinguish between tanks and infantry at a distance of one mile.
(...Karl Dishaw)

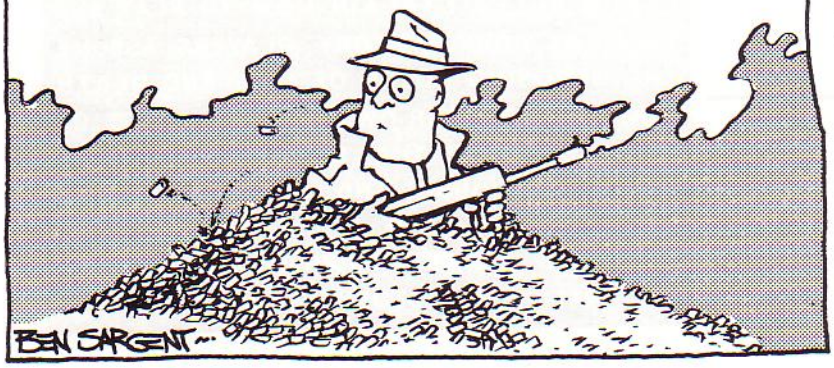
TRY A FIRECRACKER...
In TSR's TOP SECRET, it usually takes three grenade explosions to kill the average player-character-agent.
(...W.G. Armintrout)

TAKE THAT!
In BOOT HILL (TSR), a small child or little old lady can punch as effectively as the toughest wrangler. (...Jim Simons)

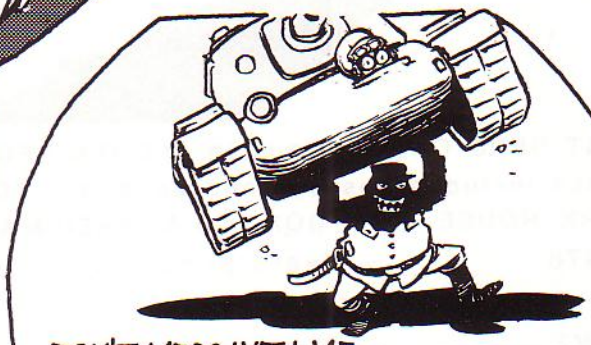


QUICK STOP...
In CAR WARS (Steve Jackson Games), a car can go from 30 mph to an instant stop with only a 50 per cent chance of skidding.
(...Chris Smith)

BLAST AWAY...
The fastest spies in Hero Games' ESPIONAGE can load, fire until emptied, and reload their Uzi submachine guns three times in 12 seconds. (...W.G. Armintrout)



BEN SARGENT...



DON'T MESS WITH ME...
In Yaquinto's BEACHHEAD, a single Japanese commander has four times the firepower of a 10-man squad. (...Karl Westerholm)

Counter Intelligence
by Aaron Allston

(Or, Where I'm Going — Apologies to SJ)

This, I regret to say, is my last issue of *Space Gamer*. *FG* 2 was my last *Fantasy Gamer*. After an eternity as circulation manager, seven issues as assistant editor, and seventeen issues as editor, I'm moving on.

Why, you ask? (A couple of you, anyway.) The Freelance Trail beckons. My great ambition has always been to earn my living at home, with my own tripewriter and my own hours – writing, designing *and* editing. I think I can do it now; wish me luck.

You're not getting rid of me entirely, however. Most of my work will still be in the gaming industry. I'll still be visible at gaming conventions. (I may even appear in this magazine's lettercol – that would be an experience. Hmmm . . .)

Next In Line

Moving into the hotseat of *Space Gamer* and *Fantasy Gamer* editor and editorial coordinator is Christopher "Rood Boy" Frink, formerly *FG*'s assistant editor. Chris is 6'5" and massive, granting him the irritating ability to both loom and hulk at the same time; his less flashy journalistic skills should keep the magazines on track. Wish *him* luck, too. I'll give him whatever space is left at the end of this column to talk about his plans and ideas. Richard Steinberg, formerly *SG* assistant editor, is now assistant editor to both magazines.

Endnotes

In the final analysis, it's been a trial and a pleasure editing *SG* and *FG* for the past year and a half. I'm glad I had the opportunity to interact with contributors and readership as bright, varied and outspoken as this magazine's. Good luck to you, too. *–AA*

Into the Hotseat

Aaron's left a big place for me to fill. Given time, I'm sure I can do it with some help from Richard and my new assistant editor, Warren Spector. Warren's an avid gamer and fine editor, and is working on his Ph. D. in Radio/Television/Film at the University of Texas. Warren is a computer game fiend, and should add to our computer game coverage.

I'm sure you noticed this *Space Gamer* was late – very late. We are chagrined and embarrassed . . . please bear with us. There are no serious problems – but between the personnel changeover and the game in this issue, we fell behind. (Our first game choice fell through, and we brought ***Orbit War*** off the bench.) You'll see us again in two months or less.

Help!

Since we split *TSG* into *SG* and *FG*, we've had a wonderful cascade of submissions – most of it fantasy related. That's good for *Fantasy Gamer* – we've got some great fiction, games, and scenarios coming up – but we're running on empty here at *SG*. So if you have some *good* ideas for articles, fiction, or scenarios, send 'em in. We are especially hard-up for *generic* s-f scenarios – that is, adventures that can be played with any science fiction RPG.

This Ish

We have *two* complete games this month. The main attraction is Wallace Wang's ***Orbit War***; the US and the USSR use shuttles, orbital weapon platforms, and hunter-killer satellites (among others) to control the space above Earth. It's timely, fast, and exciting.

The second game is a classic beer-and-pretzels version of the same theme: ***Shuttlewars***, originally released by Paranoia Press. We thought you'd like to see it again. Have fun. *–CF* **SG**

Fantasy Gamer

In Issue 3 (Dec./Jan. 1984):

The Thing in the Darkness, a solo adventure for **Call of Cthulhu**. It's a self-contained adventure, so anybody can play – just don't read it before you go to sleep;

Three for One – adapting three fantasy boardgames for solo play;

Rhan-Tegoth – a new (and nasty) deity for **Call of Cthulhu**;

The Strangler – a new character class for **D&D** (or any FRPG);

A featured review of **Lost Worlds**; and

A terrifying piece of mysterious fiction.

Space Gamer

In Issue 67 (Jan./Feb. 1984):

Interdiction Station – a shortish scenario set on a small space station. A change of pace for some of you experienced gamers or a dandy introductory adventure.

Featured reviews of three new secret agent RPGs – **James Bond 007, Espionage!**, and **Mercenaries, Spies, and Private Eyes**;

Capsule reviews of **Silo 14, Knight Hawks**, and **Big Rubble**, among others.

In upcoming issues:

The Island of Entellope – a generic, after-the-holocaust adventure;

Designer's notes and advanced rules for **Orbit War**.

Autoduel Quarterly

In Issue 4 (Winter 2033):

Maniac – autoduelling in a shopping mall;

Anti-cyclist tactics;

Trucking economics;

New products from Uncle Albert.

In upcoming issues:

The Long Way Around – delivering a bomb expert to defuse a terrorist bomb, a programmed **Car Wars** solo adventure;

The **AADA** – details on the formation of the American Autoduel Association.

Fire & Movement

In Issue 38 (Nov./Dec. 1983):

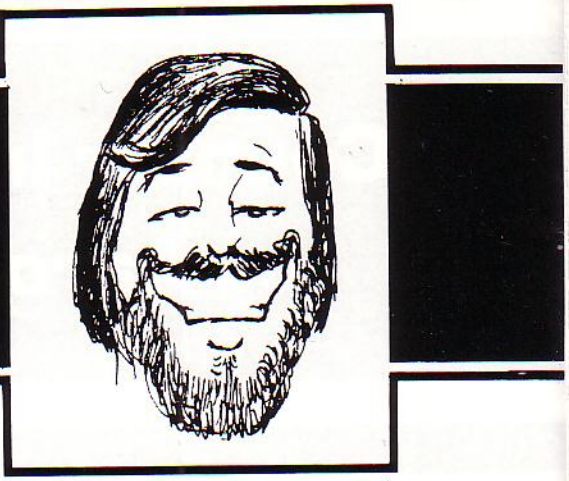
Featured review of Simulations Canada's **D.A.K./La Regia Marina**;

Making **Atlantic Wall** more playable;

Modern armor miniatures rules overview;

Featured review of (computer) **Close Assault**.

Where We're Going
by Steve Jackson



Some issues I don't have much for this column. On the other hand, sometimes there's a lot of news. This time, there's entirely too much. Since I can't take up three pages, I'll use small type and try to be concise.

For openers, we're having some staff changes on *SG* and *FG*. Aaron Allston, who's been our editor roughly forever, has left to pursue a career as a free-lance writer and designer. If anybody can do it, he can; wish him luck.

For now, Aaron's editorial positions (both of them) will be filled by Chris Frink, with Warren Spector and Richard Steinberg as his assistants. They've been with SJG long enough to know what's going on; they'll do a good job.

The Convention Trail

It's convention season; nearly every weekend, it seems, we make a convention trip. And in the past few weeks, we've had our best two conventions ever. Also one of our worst.

Origins '83 was the best *and* the worst. Best, because we really cleaned up on awards (see box), we sold a lot of games, and we met a lot of people. Worst, because Detroit is a disaster area for visitors. Ral Partha's van was impounded, then stripped in the police lot; several other companies had smaller problems; and we suffered a hotel burglary. On the last night of the con, more than $1,000 in checks, traveller's checks, charge slips, and change was stolen from our room at the Hotel Pontchartrain. The thief's profits could only have been about $20 – the paper wasn't negotiable – but if (a) your check or charge from Origins never clears, (b) your subscription from Origins doesn't start, or (c) you see me frown when someone mentions Detroit . . . that's why. But the convention was fun all the same – and thank you all for the Hall of Fame award. I was flabbergasted.

GenCon '83 was, unqualifiedly, one of the best ever. After our problems there last year, I was hesitant about going. But nothing happened. I mean *nothing*. It was well-run; we had fun; and the trip far more than paid for itself (we sold out of ***Car Wars*** and several other things). Skip Williams deserves thanks for a good job of organizing.

One other thing I've been doing recently – like conventions, but not exactly – is "personal appearances." This is a session, sponsored by a game or book store, where I get to meet gamers, maybe do some refereeing, answer questions, and whatnot. In many ways, it's better than a convention. At cons, I'm usually being pulled 14 different ways; I have to give seminars, talk business, help run tourneys, and so on . . . all at the same time, over a wide area, and on very little sleep. Cons are fun, but they kill me. A game-store appearance has most of the benefits of a con, with few of the problems. I made a trip to Fantastic Worlds in Fort Worth on September 24–25, and one to Mile High Comics in Denver on Nov. 18–19. If any more come up, I'll try to mention them here, in advance.

Sincere Flattery

The *Space Gamer / Fantasy Gamer* split is going very well; *FG* 1 is already completely sold out. And *Dragon* Magazine has honored us with some very sincere flattery. In their August '83 issue, they announce that the TSR magazine combo of *Dragon* and *Ares* is following suit; *Dragon* will concentrate on fantasy, and *Ares* on science fiction. I *thought* it was a good idea . . .

New Releases

Currently, we're planning ***Car Wars*** Expansion 3 (East Midville) and Expansion 4 (Armadillo Autoduel Arena) for sometime before Christmas. If you're a subscriber, you can order in advance from this issue's mailer cover. Otherwise, just watch for them in your hobby shop. They'll retail for $3.00 each.

But even sooner than that (like probably already in the stores) will be the ***Car Wars Map Sheets*** package. This is a set of five identical sheets in a 9" x 12" ziplock bag. Each sheet is 21" by 32", printed with the ***Car Wars*** grid pattern on *both* sides, for do-it-yourself arenas, towns, factory complexes, or whatever your vicious little heart desires. Retail price is $5.00.

At Last, Software

For at least two years, I've been trying to get software versions of our games produced – either by SJ Games, or by another company. It's been frustrating. We've talked seriously with several companies, including two big computer manufacturers. But, for one reason or another, things always fell through. Until now.

Many of you have probably heard of "Lord British," the author of the computer games ***Akalabeth***, ***Ultima***, and ***Ultima II***. He's had the same sort of experiences that I did when I was starting out, and his response was the same: "I'll start my own company!" So he did. It's called Origin Software Systems. By the time you read this, the first Origin programs will be available: ***Ultima III*** and ***Caverns of Callisto***, both for the Apple II+. But, before too long, you'll see some other Origin titles . . . very familiar ones . . . like ***Ogre*** and ***Car Wars***. An ***Undead*** program is in the works, too, though it won't be published under that name. The first versions will be for the Apple II+; Atari is probably next. And ***Illuminati*** and ***Battlesuit*** will probably be done before the end of 1984. Watch for them. **SG**

SJ Games Origins Awards

Space Gamer Magazine: Best Professional Magazine Covering Role-Playing.
Fire & Movement Magazine: Best Professional Magazine Covering Boardgaming.
Illuminati: Best Science Fiction Board Game
Steve Jackson: Hall of Fame

* * *

Illuminati: Game Designers' Guild Select Award

Letters

I hate to complain, but since you split *Space Gamer* into two mags, it has gone rapidly downhill. I am not referring to the philosophy of having fantasy one month and SF the next, I'm talking about the issues I have received so far.

SG 64 started off with an ugly, unimpressive cover. It looked like a shot out of a very cheap old movie. Your covers were once very good, especially Dave Martin's work. Your ***Star Trek*** review and designer's notes were well done and timely, though too long for my tastes. Your regular columns and features ("Murphy's Rules") were good as always. I liked the ***Ogre*** article.

My main complaint about *SG* 64 was the cowboys and dinosaurs in the middle. What, pray tell, is SF about the old west and the prehistoric past, other than the fact that they both inexplicably wind up taking over a dozen pages of my magazine? I don't play ***Boot Hill*** or ***Wild West***, and I don't think many people buy a science fiction magazine to read about them.

Thomas B. Cornwell
Bluefield, WV

I'm afraid your last remark strikes me as a peculiar sort of SF snobbery. The lost world romance has been a staple of science fiction for a ***long*** *time, in both text and film – from Doyle's* ***The Lost World****, through half of the works of Edgar Rice Burroughs and other writers, continuing as a popular genre today.* ***Space Gamer*** *does not exist only to promote hard-science outer-space simulation, not when there are so many other entertaining divisions within the SF field.*
–AA

Just finished *SG* 64 – the one that starts the split and (more importantly) has a letter in it from me. (It's Pella, not Della, but my handwriting is often atrocious, so I won't complain.)

All in all, a pretty good issue, considering that I know no one who has either ***Boot Hill*** or ***Wild West***. The scenario and article are almost enough to make me want to get one of the games (or both) and get playing.

I have one observation, though. Your "new look" is all well and good, but one of my favorite parts of the Coming Attractions box is the little final note of something bizarre (like "a lotta fairies," "The Post Office," and "a twit, an angel, and a blivit.") that kept the reader guessing. Of course, I get the magazine for its reviews and feature articles and scenarios, but those little humorous touches mustn't be lost as SJG and *SG* get bigger.

I can think of better uses of the space in your magazine than to illustrate the reviews with photos of the game covers and/or components, especially with capsule reviews. I may be in the minority, but the box cover never causes me to buy or reject a game (except, of course, for its name, company, and blurbs). The space used for these this month could have been filled with another capsule review.

Russel Grant Collins
Pella, IA

I hadn't realized, until the letters started coming in, that the teasers in the Coming Attractions box were so well-regarded. (Like so many things around this office, they started off as a joke and ended up as the norm.) I'll recommend them to my successor.

I'm afraid I have to disagree about the presentation of cover and components art in the reviews. If we didn't use that art, we wouldn't be taking up the space with more text – we'd use other art. At least component illustrations are relevant. We've heard a lot of gamers say that they wouldn't mind if we eliminated art from the issues altogether and filled them cover-to-cover with text, but the subliminal effect on the readers of graphics is too important a factor to discard – yes, we could cram ***SG*** *with pertinent text and make it look like a textbook, but we want our views heard by more than the die-hard gamers who wouldn't notice such a change. That's the price of operating a professional publication.*
–AA

In an age of man now only distantly remembered, there existed a magazine which the good people in the land of Fandom did enjoy. But lo, there came a day unlike any other day, when the Powers That Be sent a lightning bolt to rend asunder that magazine.

From the fragments of the one there emerged two magazines, and the Powers That Be told the people of Fandom to partake of them.

And lo! They found them to be very good indeed!

All right, it's stretching it a bit, but you get the point.

I've been a follower of *Space Gamer*, off and on, since issue 18. When you took over the magazine it became more on than off. By the time the split was announced, I was confident enough to subscribe to both, sight unseen. I wasn't disappointed.

A sister magazine is the smartest way to grow (after all, it gets two magazines on the rack at once, doesn't it?) and I'm glad to see you've made the transition smoothly.

But then – did anyone doubt it?

John O'Neill
Ottawa, Ontario

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Capsule Reviews

Space Gamer reviews science fiction boardgames, role-playing games, computer games, play-by-mail games, and game supplements. We will review any SF game if the publisher sends us a copy. We do not guarantee reviews of historical games.

The staff will make reasonable efforts to check reviews for factual accuracy, but opinions expressed by reviewers are not necessarily those of the magazine.

Games and game items for which *Space Gamer* has assigned or received reviews include (The) ***Alien, Alien Armada, Traveller*** miniatures, ***Combots, Deep Space Navigator, Espionage, Galactac, Illuminati, Mercenaries Spies & Private Eyes, MSPE*** miniatures, ***Nuclear Escalation, San Succi, Shuttle Intercept, Silo 14, Space Opera*** miniatures, *Super Heroes* miniatures, ***Villains & Vigilantes*** miniatures, and ***Warboid World.***

Games and game items for which *Space Gamer* is seeking reviews include *Autoduel Quarterly*, ***Cassiopeian Empire***, Close Simulations Unitrays, ***Cosmic Balance II – The Strategic Game, Famine in Far-Go, Fasolt in Peril, The Forever War, Gamma World*** (revised), ***Gamelord, High Ranger Guard, Judge Dredd, Knight Hawks, Lee's Guide to Interstellar Adventure, M.I.S.S.I.O.N., Operation: Fastpass, Operation Guardian, Operation Peregrine, Pentantastar, Race in Space, Recon, Spectre, Star Commander, Star Explorer, Star Fleet Battle Manual, Star Sector Atlas 2, Star Sentry,*** *Survival Force* miniatures, ***Tarsus, To Challenge Tomorrow, Traveller Starter Edition, The Undersea Environment, Veterans, Volturnus/Planet of Mystery, Voyager I,*** and ***Witness for the Defense.***

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GAMES

ANT WARS (Jason McAllister); $7.50. Designed by Jason McAllister. Large envelope, with 8-page 5½" x 8½" rulebook, 32 cards, and 189 counters, plus two 11" x 17" mapsheets. Published 1982. For two or three players; playing time one hour.

The ants are battling it out for control of your back yard. Queens lay eggs which hatch into workers, soldiers, and more queens. They fight for the best food-gathering territories. Every so often, natural disasters thin the population – or that brat Billy blows up a whole anthill – but the ants keep on multiplying . . .

In *Ant Wars*, each player controls the destiny of one tribe of ants – black, brown, or red – represented by magnificent die-cut, silkscreened, 1" counters on heavy cardboard. The beautiful counters, unfortunately, are not matched by the hastily assembled rulebook, map and cards. But the game is simple and fun. You need to control your expansion and choose the right population mix. Workers gather food while soldiers are useless in peacetime – but if you are attacked, one soldier is worth at least three workers in battle. Queens are defenseless but can start new nests to breed more hordes. *Where* you expand is important, too; some parts of the backyard battlefield are rich in food but disaster-prone, while others are safe but nonproductive. The game plays quickly, developing into a battle of siege and feint, raids and withdraw. You can win by destroying the enemy, or just by outnumbering him decisively.

A little more development would have been worthwhile. After my first few games, I changed the turn sequence to put Hatching before Movement – this speeded things up remarkably without changing the game's flavor. The productivity of each area should be marked on the map but isn't. The "disaster" cards affect play greatly, but the "extra food" cards rarely help anyone at all, and never significantly. There's no provision for stored food; the ants live (so to speak) hand-to-mouth each turn. (I have been told that there is now an errata sheet to clear up some of these questions, but I haven't seen it.)

On the whole, though, it's fun. I can't help it . . . I have to say this: *I like it despite the bugs in it.* Sorry . . . couldn't resist. If your game store doesn't have this one (and it probably doesn't) you can order for $7.50 plus 50 cents postage & handling from Jason McAllister Games, 2416 Grape St., Joliet, IL 60435.

– Steve Jackson

STAR FLEET BATTLES COMMANDER'S RULEBOOK (Task Force Games); $12.95. Designed by Stephen V. Cole. Addition to the ***Star Fleet Battles*** game line. 96-page rulebook, eight-page chart fold/cut-out, loose-leaf plastic notebook. Published 1983.

The ***Commander's Rulebook*** is the long-promised consolidation of the ***Star Fleet Battles*** rules and expansions. A new organization system presents the rules of the game by subject and in an orderly fashion, in contrast to the old method of rules organization. The chart cut-out provides miniatures rules and turning gauges, complete Master Ship Charts, a consolidated turn mode chart, damage allocation chart, and a Master Weapons Chart.

The ***Commander's Rulebook*** has much to applaud besides the reorganization. The loose-leaf notebook is decorated with a huge Star Fleet Universe logo, and is quite attractive. The charts are handy, especially the Master Weapons Chart, which has heretofore not existed. The printing is superior, and the organization is a giant step for game comprehension. Some new rules are added, besides those put in from the expansions (new and better rules for the Cloaking device, reserve power, etc.), plus an entire section on navigation hazards (planets, black holes, etc.). There are also new and better diagrams (including some very helpful ones on the use of the Tholian Web generator). But, of course, the fact that all of the rules on a particular subject (*any* particular subject) are in the same place at the same time is the best feature of the ***Commander's Rulebook***. No more flipping through two to four books to find a rule!

Unfortunately, the ***Commander's Rulebook*** is not complete. It is missing rules from the expansions. Rules from the expansions pertaining to the systems in the basic rulebook are present; new sections (new weaponry, ship's systems, manuevers, pseudofighters) introduced in the expansions are not here. Notations at the places where they should have been refer to 'Volume II', and I have also found references to 'Volume III'. This means that gamers will have to buy at least two more volumes (hopefully at lower prices) to have the complete game. Also, the Impulse Charts and Energy/Movement Cost Conversion Chart were not included.

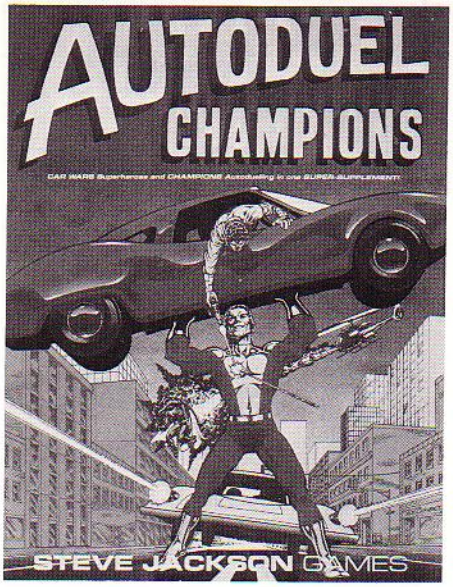
The ***Commander's Rulebook*** is what ***Star Fleet Battles*** should have been in the first place. If you have a photographic memory and can remember where every rule is with the old system, you won't need this rulebook. If not, this rulebook will be almost essential.

– Craig Sheeley

SUPPLEMENTS

AUTODUEL CHAMPIONS (Steve Jackson Games); $10.00. Designed by Aaron Allston. Supplement to ***Car Wars*** and ***Champions***. 63-page rulebook, double-sided 21" by 32" map, 131-counter sheet. Published 1983.

Autoduel Champions adapts ***Car Wars*** to ***Champions/Espionage***, introduces the concept of superheroes to ***Car Wars*** with a heavily modified set of skills from ***Champions***, and features rules for aerial combat, using helicopters. The first section gives skills, equipment, vehicles, and campaign ideas for autoduelling within the Hero Games character generation and combat system. Autoduellists aren't as tough as an average superhero, but their vehicles make up for the difference. The second section concerns itself with ***Car Wars*** helicopter generation/construction, movement, combat, damage, and the inevitable crashing



section (crashing a chopper is like being hit by a semi – not much left of the vehicle). The third section concerns putting superheroes into ***Car Wars***. It is possible to convert a ***Champions*** hero to this system, if you want to use the ***Car Wars*** combat system instead of the ***Champions*** system. Also included are suggestions on how to convert ***Car Wars*** supplements and materials to the ***Champions*** system and vice-versa, and two adventures to get you started (one for each system).

The counters, done by Denis Loubet, are superb. They include ***Champions***-sized auto and

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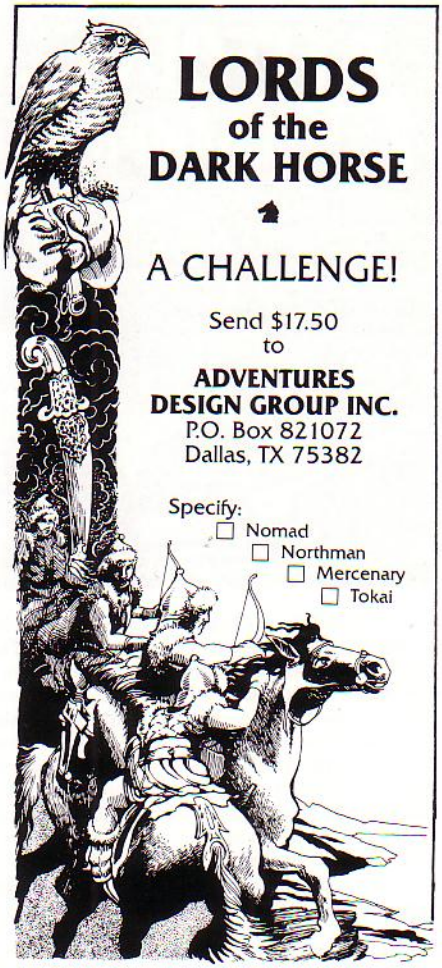

helicopter counters, as well as helicopter and hero counters for ***Car Wars***. Eight *Cardboard Heroes* are included. As usual, internal art is well done. Organization is good, with an index included. ***Car Wars*** fans will love the mind-boggling amount of accessories now available, including auto computers and LAW mounts (not to mention the sound system for helicopters).

This supplement has everything you need for helicopters and heroes with either system. Combined with the counters, map, and artwork, it's (pardon the expression) highway robbery for $10. I'd expect such a package to cost $12-14. If you own ***Champions***, ***Espionage***, or ***Car Wars***, it's more than worth the price.

– Craig Sheeley

PLAY AIDS

FORMS AND CHARTS (Game Designers' Workshop); $5.00. Designed by Marc W. Miller. One 5½" x 8½" book, indefinite number of players. Published 1983.

Forms and Charts is a compilation of all the various forms and charts that have been appearing in different places as handouts from GDW – at conventions, on the mailing wrapper for the *Journal of the Travellers' Aid Society*, portions of some adventures, etc. Instead of marketing 20+ individual forms as bundles of reproductions, to be sold individually, the folks at GDW put them all into one booklet – with the express permission that you can photocopy the entire booklet in any quantity desired. I hope the gaming community is mature and intelligent enough to justify their confidence in us.

All sorts of forms are reproduced in this book – personal data and character generation, ship's papers, cargo manifests, design worksheets, mapping forms (sector, sub-sector, and planetary), as well as a variety of mercenary forms and xboat forms. A number of these forms are particularly well-designed, especially the mercenary tickets and the xboat forms. An imaginative referee could add a lot of impact to his or her campaign through the well-crafted use of these forms and original artwork. As a final treat, GDW has included two bonuses: a copy of the standard and Imperial calendars, and 12 "identification cards." These cards can be photocopied/printed on thicker paper (suggestions on how to do this are included) and used either by players as a gag or by the referee in campaigns to add even more impact to an event: imagine giving your players a real wallet, supposedly found on a body, and allowing them to find "real" identification cards inside! The cards are from a variety of sources – Tukera Space Lines, a research station access card, the Scouts, the University of Rhylanor, the Travellers' Aid Society, the Traveller News Service . . . all in all, twelve beautiful and well-designed extras.

Complaints? Only a few . . . unless you have a typewriter with a small element, or can write fairly small (and neatly!), you will probably have to use extra sheets of paper to fill in all of the information you typically have on a character or ship. The "starship deck plan grids" (small and large grids) are much too small for most ships, and are definitely too small for either 15mm or 25mm miniatures. These are probably the most useless forms included in the book. The world map grid could have been

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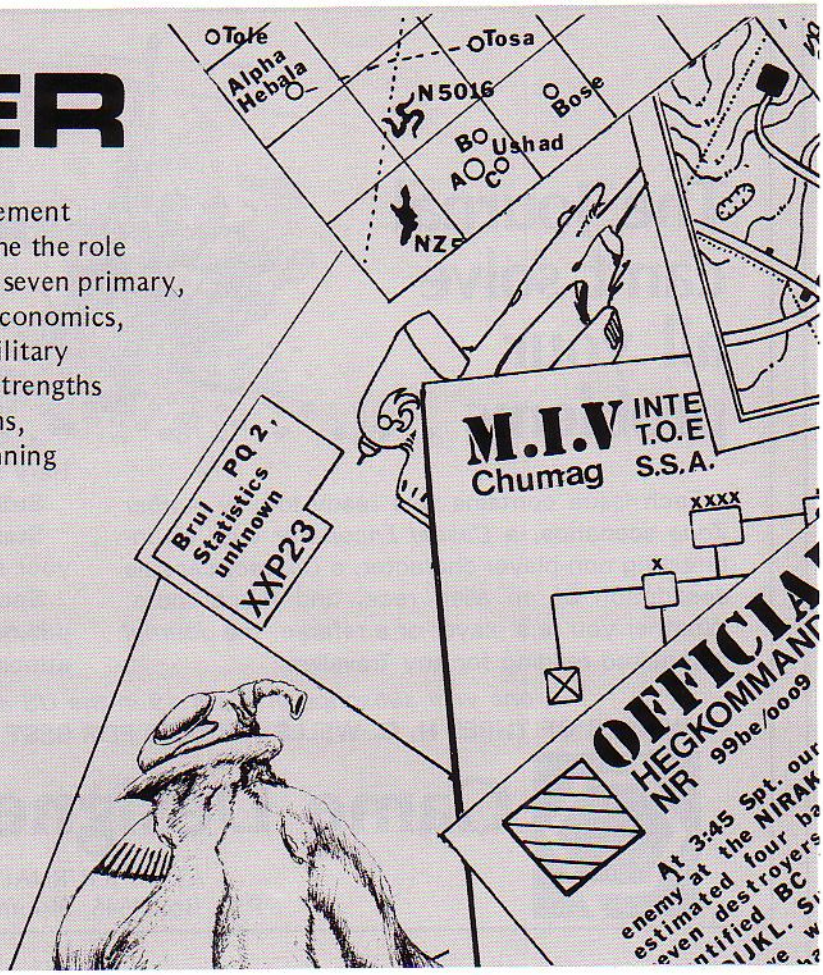

larger – the size included does not allow you the chance to work some really fine detail in.

I found ***Forms and Charts*** to be a well thought-out and prepared ***Traveller*** supplement. I especially like the out-front permission to photocopy to our heart's content. This supplement, when carefully used, will add a lot to a referee's ***Traveller*** campaign.

– Frederick Paul Kiesche III

CAR WARS REFERENCE SCREEN (Steve Jackson Games); $5.00. Compiled by the staff of *Autoduel Quarterly*. ***Car Wars*** supplement. Three-panel fold-out screen with five faces of charts, enlarged record sheets for all vehicles, vehicle design data sheet, pedestrian record sheet. Published 1983.

The ***Car Wars Reference Screen*** is for the ***Car Wars*** referee who wants all of the charts at his fingertips. Maneuver tables, weapon charts, modifiers, and crash tables are included, along with an index. The enlarged record sheets are included for those who opined that the old ones were too small, and the vehicle design data sheet allows spot checks on damage and weight potentials.

The best feature of the screen is the Advanced Collision System, which replaces the old system. This system simulates actual collisions quite well, and makes them much deadlier (don't get hit by a loaded semi). Though complex at first, the added realism is worth it.

There are a few problems: The 'to hit' modifiers are not with the weapon tables, requiring the user to be continually looking from one side to the opposite one; hazards and road conditions are not as clearly presented as before, and the Advanced Collision System may confuse some people. However, the most frightening thing is the index. There's nothing wrong with the index, until you see how many places you have to look to find things. ***Car Wars*** is accumulating too many rulebooks, similar to the plight of ***Star Fleet Battles*** and ***Squad Leader***. Perhaps SJ Games might make a consolidated rulebook, like Task Force Games did for ***Star Fleet Battles***. And I wish that the original plans to include vehicle chart pads had been carried out; $5.00 is a lot to pay for three pieces of cardboard and an equal number of paper sheets.

If you don't buy *Autoduel Quarterly*, or you really need all the ***Car Wars*** charts in one place, buy this screen. Otherwise, you can get the Advanced Collision System in the Summer 2033 *Autoduel Quarterly*, and skip paying $5 for this screen. I just can't recommend it for the price.

– Craig Sheeley

COMPUTER GAMES

GALACTIC ADVENTURES (SSI); $59.95. Designed by Tom Reamy for the Apple II 48K with disk and Applesoft in ROM, or Apple III. For one or two players (best with one). Published 1982.

SSI used their ***Galactic Gladiators*** graphics and combat system and designed an adventure game around them. The player selects a leader who hits the streets, recruiting or buying team members. Then begins the process of building up skills and acquiring wealth and equipment. At first one does this in a series of random encounters on the streets of several worlds – taking jobs, selling loot, or in combat. Experienced leaders then can go on a large number of adventures.

The above description does not cover the wealth of play value and excellent detail in this game. There are subgames for using skills and traveling the stars between planets. There is a provision for designing one's own adventures when the adventures provided are all solved. Extensive play revealed that there are a wealth of options buried in the program. (I once failed a medical job and the patient's companions attacked.)

However, there are flaws. The game is very combat-oriented, with no real puzzles to solve as in some text oriented adventure games. The game runs slower as the number of characters increases. The disks themselves could have been of higher quality: with four people playing our review disks are wearing out. Minor programming flaws, such as the K-teleporter only sending a character to the left side of the screen, aid Player 1. Lower-level characters often crash the program with division-by-zero errors. One of the most annoying flaws is a bad subscript error in line 240 of the computer's planning routine. This occurs most often in Sensitives Guild adventures, or when one's ship is attacked by Gorsai pirates. If one did save at the beginning of the adventure, just restart, then go into player mode, and think schizophrenic. (I am proud of one battle where I inflicted 70% casualties on myself.) The adventure instructions are not clear at all. It takes a while to master the mechanics of adventure construction.

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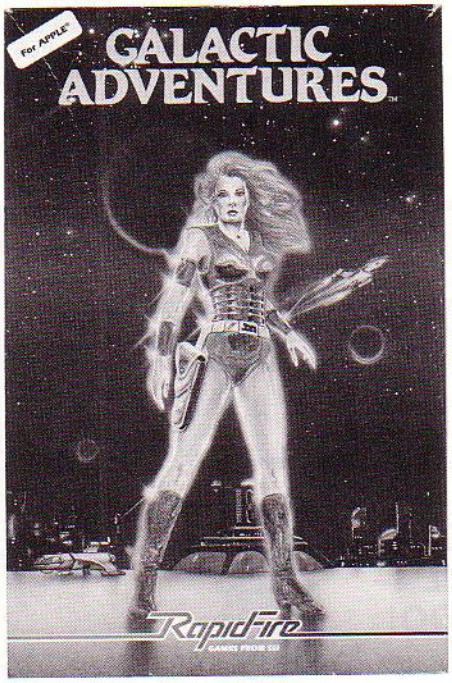
Most of the problems are only irritations as long as you save the game every chance you get. ***Galactic Adventures*** is a very fine game. It has excellent graphics, a wealth of options, and the game works. The price is high, but the cost per hour becomes very low. I found that ***Galactic Adventures*** is not a game that gets old fast. It is an excellent addition to almost any adventure gamer's computer library.

– Norman J. Banduch



PC ARCADE (Friendlysoft); $49.95. Programming by Alan Vanchura and others. One disk, 30-page, 5½" x 8½" booklet in small 3-ring binder. Arcade game assortment for IBM PC with 64K, one disk and any monitor (no graphic card or game card needed). Playing time indefinite. Published 1983.

This Friendlyware arcade is a unique item: ten arcade games for use in the text mode of the IBM PC. The expensive Color/Graphic card is not needed. The games are clones of some of the popular best-seller arcade games, such as "Gorilla Gorilla" (***Donkey Kong***), "Star Fighter TX-16" (***Defender***) and "ASCII MAN" (***Pac Man***). The screen images are all cobbled out of the ASCII set of letters, numbers, symbols and shapes; game control is via a joystick or the keyboard. Other features include a pause switch which displays an important-looking graph on the screen (so the boss thinks you're working on something official) and two-player option on most of the games. The copy-protected disk has a lifetime replacement guarantee.

I was a little disappointed with ***PC Arcade*** at first: the graphics are dull, the colors unexciting, and most of the games lack some of the features of the originals. But after many hours of "Robot War" (***Berzerk***, sans Evil Otto) and "Hopper" (a good rendition of ***Frogger***) I've become modestly enthusiastic about the set. It's a marvelous way to try out some of the better arcade games without spending a bundle on individual programs.

There are a few problems with the set: there is one bug which occasionally freezes play on some of the games (fortunately cured by rebooting); a few of the games are dull and/or poor adaptions from the original. A second edition with such duds as "Shooter" and the totally random "PC Derby" removed to make room for more detail/adjustable skill levels in the other games would be a better buy.

I highly recommend ***PC Arcade*** to PC users who want to try arcade games but don't care about superb graphics or absolute fidelity to the classics these games emulate. Hard-core arcadists (arcadites? arcaders?) may be disappointed, though.

– Stefan Jones

REIGN OF THE RED DRAGON (Adventure International); $24.95. Written by David Daring for the 48K TRS-80 Model 1 & 3. Includes disk, eight-page instruction manual and command prompt card. One to five players; playing time several days. Published 1982.

This is a dungeon-type adventure. You and up to four friends direct a group of five characters on a quest into a castle where you must recover eight fragments of an ancient scepter. The red dragon will then appear and must be destroyed in combat.

Many options are available in this game. For each character you choose from four character types and four professions. Each character is given an initial supply of gold based upon the difficulty level chosen. The gold is used to outfit characters by buying from a list of available supplies that varies with profession. For example, only magicians can buy fireballs while thieves can buy hiding cloaks, but either can buy wine. The castle is medium-sized and there is an adequate variety of monsters with well-defined and different characteristics. Normally you are shown an overhead view, but when there is an encounter, the perspective shifts to a face-on view. This lets you view your adversary about as well as can be achieved given the TRS-80's low resolution graphics. The programming is in BASIC, but this actually is an advantage: Speed is very acceptable; there are no long waits while a new section is drawn, and BASIC programming makes it very easy to modify the program as desired.

My biggest complaint about this program is that there is a minor flaw in the save-game routine. The characters are saved, but their location is lost. You must start over from the castle entry. This is a nuisance, but in a larger dungeon it would have been a fatal flaw. This program could have been enhanced by sound effects and the animated encounters would have been more fun if they were more challenging.

If you enjoy this type of program, I recommend ***Reign of the Red Dragon*** as superior to some similar programs available in this price range.

– Bruce Campbell

CORRECTION

Through an error in the *Space Gamer* offices, the Schubel & Son ad in issue 65 gave the wrong prices for the ***Starmaster*** game.

The correct prices are $12.00 to enter, plus $3.50 per turn.

We regret the error. Don't blame S&S – it really wasn't their fault – we're sorry, honest . . .

MINIATURES

DESTROYERS II (Castle Creations); $3. Pack #8 in the *Villains and Vigilantes* line. Three 25mm figures (metal) per pack. Released 1983.

This pack (and its brother, *Destroyers I*) is the latest release in Castle Creation's *V&V* superhero line. *Destroyers II* contains: Ratman, a supervillain with rat's tail, large pointed ears and bulging muscles; Shapeshifter, a villainess in one-piece uniform with a stretched-out arm; and Behemoth, an 8' giant with bared teeth and even bulgier muscles.

These figures look unimpressive in their packs, but a coat of paint makes all the difference. Behemoth is the star, with a wonderfully ugly mug (he looks ready to snarl) and such details as teeth and toenails. Shapeshifter has molded outlines for doing her uniform in two colors (very convenient). There is little flash and the bases rest flat.

Shapeshifter has a minor seam on her face – the only visible seam in the set – that can be tricky to remove. Behemoth's base is too small – he tips over. Ratman's arms are mismatched, Behemoth's shorts are hard to locate (or is it a g-string?), and Shapeshifter's long arm will "goose" any figure in front of her (careful repositioning of the arm will cut down on the funny remarks).

Behemoth would be a great accessory for any collection. Shapeshifter and Ratman, while not of display quality, are good enough for game use. These figures are much better than they look in their pack – don't overlook this set.

– W. G. Armintrout

STARLINE 2200 (Task Force); $3.95-$5.50. Miniatures for ***Star Fleet Battles***. Released 1983.

Starline 2200 ships are produced by Task Force for their ***Star Fleet Battles*** rules. Each blister pack contains a lead cast ship, a clear plastic stand, paint guide, and color facing chart. Task Force produces nearly thirty ships, of which four are reviewed here: the Romulan Condor, Hydran Lancer, Gorn Destroyer, and Lyran Heavy Cruiser.

The Romulan Condor ($5.50) is the most impressive of the group, being a rather large, one-piece casting. It is reminiscent of the smaller 'television' warbird with some punch behind it. The surface detail is excellent and the surface finish is smooth (not pitted like large castings tend to be). The Hydran Cruiser is a

one-piece, triangular ship. The Gorn Destroyer and Lyran Cruiser (all $3.95) are multi-piece castings that assemble incredibly well.

The miniatures paint up nicely and, though they were intended for gaming, make nice collector's items. The castings are clean and flash is minimal and easily removed. Considering the quality of most castings today, Task Force is doing a fine job.

– Ed Andrews

STAR TREK – THE WRATH OF KHAN (FASA); $1/figure. 25mm figures for ***Star Trek: The RPG***. Released 1983.

FASA has produced a series of figures depicting the crew of the starship *Enterprise* for their ***Star Trek*** role-playing game. The figures are blister-packed on an attractive card and retail for one dollar. All the major characters from the movie are represented.

The production is flawless; there was no flash on any of the figures examined. The detailing is accurate and crisp. The uniforms are accurate and a painting guide is included on the back of each card.

Unfortunately, the figures suffer thinness and lack of animation. A few, particularly the Sulu figure, are quite striking in their action poses. The majority of them, though, are uninspired. These figures come off stiff and flat. A few are even poorly proportioned. The Khan figure is actually bending at the boots instead of the knees.

These figures are quite passable as gaming figures. Considering what they represent, and the fact that this is FASA's debut into miniatures, I wish they were exceptional.

– Ed Andrews

PERIODICALS

ADVENTURERS CLUB (Hero Games); $2.50/issue; $10.00/year subscription; $20 will also get a membership in the Adventurers Club. Edited by Steve Peterson. Published quarterly. 5½" x 8½" 32-page book.

Hero Games has come out with their own magazine which features (naturally enough) ***Champions*** and ***Espionage***, as well as news of what the heroes at Hero are doing and a letter column edited by Foxbat (of ***Enemies II*** and ***Champions II*** fame).

There is a question and answer column as well, very handy if you play the game(s) in question (a waste of time otherwise). Included in the first issue is a scenario for ***Champions***, featuring villains from the original rulebook (a great space saver). The adventure is all right, but not as good as others I've seen from them. There are also columns on ***Espionage*** (featuring package deals for police) and ***Champions*** (featuring a couple of new power modifiers that are easy to abuse if your players think that way) and a column which features a new character for ***Champions*** (this time, The Exo-Skeleton Man). These are all worthwhile reading if you play the game, possibly even if you don't.

I don't like the smaller size; it doesn't fit well with my other ***Champions*** material. It also makes the maps a bit more cramped. For ***Traveller***, everything published is this size, but for ***Champions*** only this magazine is 5½" x 8½".

The *Adventurers Club* gets you a year's subscription to the magazine, as well as a quarterly newsletter full of other worthwhile things and a discount system of products ordered directly from them.

If you GM a ***Champions*** campaign, I really recommend this magazine. If you GM ***Espionage!***, then it still might appeal to you. It is a worthy addition to the Hero line.

– Russell Grant Collins

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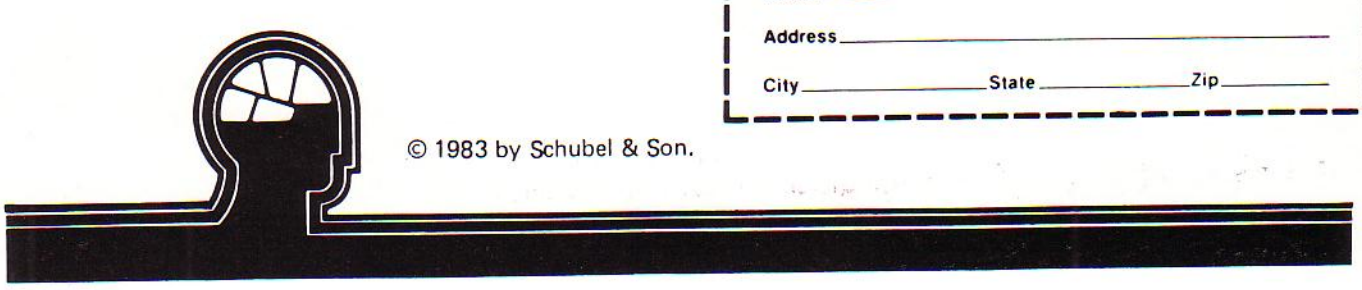

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SCANNER

News from the World of SF Gaming

November/December 1983 Edition

Delays, Disputes Plague *Ringworld* Project

Contract disputes between Chaosium and the designers, and disagreements between members of the design team, have delayed Chaosium's *Ringworld* project seriously. Rudy Kraft, the original chief designer, has now been replaced by John Hewitt. Hewitt is a serious Larry Niven fan rather than a gamer or game designer. The "gaming" elements are now in the hands of Sherman Kahn, Sandy Petersen, and other Chaosium staffers.

According to Kraft, he had been more than a year behind on the project (originally contracted in January 1982 for a May 1982 completion), but had been in weekly contact with Chaosium and received constant encouragement. When the manuscript was finally turned in, though, it was rejected; Kraft was offered $200, plus the $250 advance, in "full compensation." Having contracted for a 1.5% royalty off cover price, Kraft declined, but a settlement was eventually reached under which all his material except specific Ringworld descriptions, and all material contributed by co-designer Paul Reiche III, is deleted from the final text. Kraft's name will still appear on the game.

Chaosium now has no projected release date other than "early 1984" for the *Ringworld* game. Kraft, on the other hand, estimates that "if they work on it constantly, they might get it out by Origins '84. But I doubt it. Origins '85, maybe. It was originally a small project, but it just kept growing."

Whenever it appears, the game will feature a cover by Ralph McQuarrie, famed for his *Star Wars* artwork. The painting depicts the Ringworld arch, with giant grass-eaters grazing below floating cities. Chaosium has not disclosed the cost of the painting, but according to Steve Perrin, it was "far more than we ever paid for a cover."

News Briefs

Emprise Games Acquires *Gallactic Imperium, The Assassin's Quest*

Emprise Game Systems announces the acquisition of ***Gallactic Imperium*** from Simulations Unlimited of Georgia and ***The Assassin's Quest*** from DeJager and Co. of Canada. Former customers will be informed by mail of the changes and will have the opportunity to obtain refunds of their accounts from Emprise. Emprise expects that ***Gallactic Imperium*** will now enter a two-year period of redesign, reprogramming and testing before it's re-released. Redesign and reprogramming of ***The Assassin's Quest*** had already taken place and Emprise plans to commence testing of the game soon.

Autoduel Club Formed

The Guild has announced the formation of the Sunshine State Autoduel Club (S.S.A.C.), which will be dedicated solely to a continuing ***Car Wars*** campaign set in Ocala, FL, circa 2033. Membership dues are as follows: Associate Membership, $7.50 per year; Permanent Membership, $10 per year; and Lifetime Membership, $100. Those interested in joining should call or write Bill Hirschi, P.O. Box 943, Ocala, FL 32678, (904) 629-3110.

Convention Calendar

January 6–8: DRAGONCON. SF/F gaming con. Portland, ME. Contact Michael Ayotte, Dragon's Keep, 93 Ocean St., South Portland, ME 04106.

January 13–15: CRUSADER CON III. Gaming con. Contact The Auraria Gamer's Club, Metropolitan State College, 1006 11th St., Box 39, Denver, CO 80204.

January 13–15: ESOTERICON. A con of the Esoteric Arts. Contact Anne Pinzow, P.O. Box 290, Monsey, NY 10952-0290.

February 4: EMERALD CONQUEST '84. Boardgames, miniatures, and role-playing. Contact EmCon '84, 2180 Ohio, Eugene, OR 97402.

*February 10–12: WARCON '84. Role-playing, boardgaming, miniatures. Contact Warcon '84, MSC-SPO, Texas A&M University, College Station, TX 77840.

February 17–19: BOSKONE XXI. SF con. Contact Boskone XXI, NESFA, P.O. Box G, MIT Branch Station, Cambridge, MA 02139.

February 17–20: DUNDRACON VIII. (Gee, we'd love to tell you what is going on at this con, but the sponsors forgot to tell us.) Contact DUNDRACON, 386 Alcatraz Ave., Oakland, CA 94618.

February 24–26: WISCON 8. SF con. Contact SF-3, Box 1624, Madison, WI 53701-1624.

February 25–26: GAME FAIRE '84. Gaming con. Contact Shannon Ahern, Book and Game Company, West 621 Mallon, Spokane, WA 99202, or call (509) 325-3358.

March 3–4: GOLD CON. Role-playing/wargaming con. Contact John Dunn, Gold Con, North Campus Library, 1000 Coconut Creek Blvd., Pompano Beach, FL 33066.

*March 9–11: COASTCON '84. SF and gaming con. Contact CoastCon '84, P.O. Box 1423, Biloxi, MS 39533.

March 16–18: LUNACON '84. SF con. Contact LUNACON '84, P.O. Box 779, Brooklyn, NY 11230.

March 16–18: TRI-CON II. SF and gaming con. Contact North Carolina State Gaming Society, P.O. Box 37122, Raleigh, NC 27627.

March 17–18: CENTCON 84. Gaming con. Contact Chairman Ronald E. Vincent, 471 Commonwealth Ave., New Britain, CT 06053.

*March 29–April 1: AGGIECON XV. SF con. Contact AggieCon XV, P.O. Box J-1, College Station, TX 77844.

SJ GAMES and SG will be attending the conventions marked above with asterisks.

New & Upcoming Releases

FASA Corporation will introduce a new line of inexpensive, small-format games during the summer of 1984. All of the games in this Micro Adventure Games series will be based on science fiction films and television programs. FASA has acquired rights to produce role-playing games, board games, and metal miniatures based on Paramount Pictures' *Star Trek III*, as well as Universal Pictures' *The Last Starfighter* (a film due for release in the summer of 1984), and *Battlestar Galactica*.

A ***Battlestar Galactica*** boardgame will be released in May, with two Micro Adventures due later in the summer.

MUSE Software has released ***Titan Empire*** by Ed Zarron. It is a space adventure that teaches players about the solar system while they play.

Sirius Software, Inc. has released ***Buzzard Bait***, available for the Apple II and IBM PC computers. The game pits the player against three pairs of buzzards who prey on humans in order to feed their young.

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PBM Update

Adventures By Mail

Company News: This year we attended ORIGINS '83 in Detroit. In addition to exhibiting at the PBM display booth we held two Adventures By Mail seminars and participated in the PBM panel discussion with several other PBM companies and Rich Buda of the magazine *Nuts & Bolts of Gaming.* We would like to thank all of our players who attended. We enjoyed the feedback and discussions immensely. All totalled we met about 50–60 of our players there. Naturally ***Beyond the Stellar Empire*** was the most discussed game. This was especially true since many high level players from the Imperials, GTT, AFT, SSL, FET and SMS attended. We'd especially like to thank Alan Binkow who arranged a special party for all BSE players, at his own expense.

Beyond The Stellar Empire

A large IAN fleet was defeated recently after attempting to remove the Flagritz base on OWL's Lair in the Applecore System.

In retaliation for Community attacks against the starports of GTT Bome and GTT Hypso, the GTT has retaliated by attacking the Community home base of IND Yert's Glory. The GTT Valka, GTT Iron Maiden and GTT Grundy County were all lost in this attack but Yert's Glory was heavily damaged from the bombardment.

LCDR Baldwin of the ISS Relentless has reported to the CPT that the planet EKILL in the Texas System has an atmosphere containing a previously unknown hydrocarbon and that it should be treated with caution.

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Merger talks between the QFP and SMS have ended in failure but rumors abound of an impending WCE-QFP merger.

The new Spaceliner class starships are destined to arrive in the Capellan Periphery shortly. It is expected they will be assigned to the Capellan Periphery Passenger Service immediately upon their arrival.

The Emperor announces the end of the special bonus for colonization of three or more systems beyond the Capellan System.

Schubel & Son

The Tribes of Crane

Crane I: After a year and a half of civil war the once-proud city of Xenia at last may have achieved peace. The Grand Union's High Kinglord had long been concerned about the events in Xenia, and early in the fighting had dispatched his envoy, Pragan, to observe the actions of the participants. With his observations complete and the war once again escalating, Pragan contacted the faction leaders to end the fighting and to hold a formal court of inquiry.

Pragan has decided that Kinglord Baser will become the new city leader; Wandering Shaman Lytol will retain his present position with a reduction of his powers; and War Shaman Vongar will be reassigned to the nearby city of Zadar. Sygmata Khan was asked to renounce his claim to the city leadership and withdraw with his forces from Xenia and Pragan, in turn, supervised the removal of barricades and the withdrawal of hostile forces before turning over the city leadership to Baser. The Xenian civil war is finally over!

Crane II: For over a year the forces of the Cult have battled those of Toucan, renegade Shaman, formally of the city of Seam. Meanwhile, the Cult forces have suffered numerous defeats, most notable of which was the rape of Warak and the sack of Decca. The Cult's only remaining base in the area was the small city of Zey and its city leader, Marcus, knew that he must strike a killing blow at Toucan's forces or the city would surely fall.

Marcus, sailing north with the Cult fleet, spotted Toucan and six allied tribes, less than half his fleet! The Cult forces immediately attacked, eight tribes in a frontal assault, two tribes attacking the flanks and two raiding forces attacking the rear, with three tribes in reserve. What resulted was the greatest naval clash in the history of Crane II. In the end, the Cult fleet was victorious. Continued fighting is expected as both sides rush in reinforcements.

StarMaster

In the 4th Dimension, the well known Valkyrian Empire is once again on the rampage, apparently attempting to conquer the entire dimension! Their first victims were the Chronometric Humans of Chronos #3, who were completely destroyed. The next Valkyrian target would be Chronos #2, home of the Red Gammau Cybernauts.

The Gammau Cybernauts are a strange lifeform that is a fusion of protoplasm and machine. They build themselves into hundreds of diverse shapes to perform any task. Several hundred years ago the Gammau Cybernauts attempted to invade the 3rd dimension in an attempt to end incursions into the 4th dimension; their invasions were disorganized and unsuccessful.

In the first attack on Chronos #2 a terrible battle ensued; only a single War Globe, the Gammau flagship, survived.

The Valkyrians attacked before the Cybernauts could rebuild their defenses. Chronos #2 is now free of space defenses, virtually defenseless; only Chronos #1 remains free of Valkyrian dominance.

Starventure

In the Ulysses system the destroyer Got-Ya-1 has been wreaking havoc with its newly equipped space fighter. The Got-Ya-1 recently attacked the destroyer Asgard and damaged the destroyer Eric and the medium freighters Moire and Shenandoah. Elsewhere, in the Procyon system the destroyer ASP IX attacked and captured the light freighter Rubscrub and in the Ptolemy system the ground party SWAT attacked and captured the small, lightly defended colony UNKNOWN.

Capps & Capps

Galac-Tac

Just a reminder: The *last* number in your account number tells what galaxy you are in!

Galaxy I: A couple of ship battles have occurred and meetings for negotiations are being set up.

Galaxy II: There are rumors of a large fleet taking up three quadrants. There have been lots of hit and run ("HIDE & SEEK GAMES") between several empires. One quadrant remains very peaceful and quiet.

Galaxy III: There are some "peaceful" meetings in progress. A few empires have sent more ships out to explore the stars!

Galaxy IV: The party is underway! Nearby, a small battle happened and there are rumors that prisoners were taken. This incident has alerted a few Commanders to be more, say, cautious.

Galaxy V: There are some empires that did not waste any time in building up forces and there have been several attacks and little exploring of the galaxy.

Galaxy VI: Things are *very* quiet. No action in the skies yet.

Galaxy VII: The Supreme Commanders of the different empires are busy building ships, training cadets at their Academies, assigning and Welcoming ministers and a little exploring has begun.

Galaxy VIII: Closed out on June 20th, 1983. Just received their rule books and during August will be setting up their worlds and having their first turn.

Galaxies IX through XIV: OPENED FOR PLAYERS!

Galaxy XV: (A *big* maybe) If there is enough response to the invitation this galaxy will exist. This game is the "overseas" game that has been requested by several players! It is recommended for those that are in the services, CANADA, ENGLAND – anywhere overseas and for those with little time for two turns a month. If we get enough responses, the players will choose between a four week or a six week turn-around time. *There must be at least eight players for this "game to be."*

–War Mongrel

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